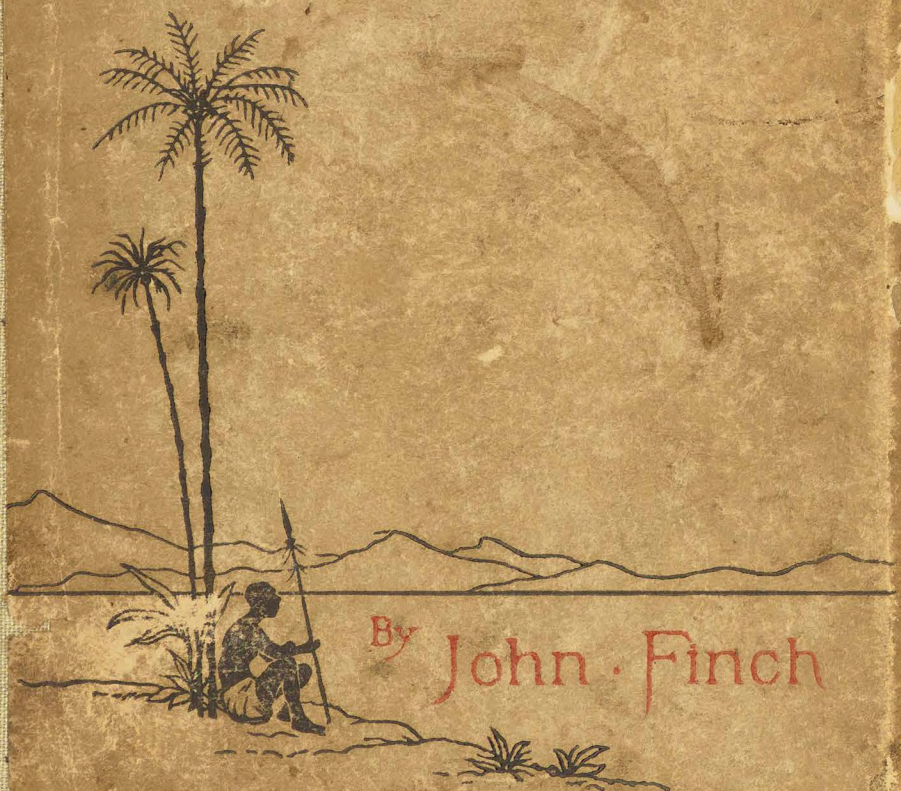
To South Africa and Back



By John Finch

Sgt A Fleetwood
Border Regt
Pretoria S.A
June 1900
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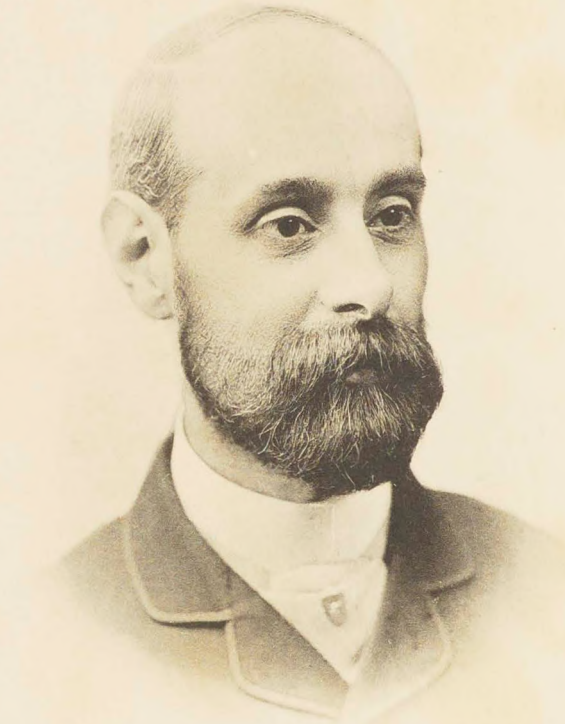

Yours faithfully
John Finch

FROM PHOTOGRAPH, BY H. R. BARRAUD, 263, OXFORD ST., W.

SOUTH AFRICA AND BACK:

NARRATIVE OF A JOURNEY THROUGH CAPE COLONY, NATAL, ORANGE FREE STATE, AND THE TRANSVAAL, INCLUDING VISITS TO THE DIAMOND AND GOLD FIELDS.

BY

JOHN FINCH.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

SAMPSON LOW, LOCK, AND CO.,
LONDON, NEW YORK, AND MELBOURNE.
1890.

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FROM PHOTOGRAPH, BY H. R. BARRAUD, 263, OXFORD ST. W.

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PREFACE.

At the present time, when so much attention is directed to the future of South Africa, it has occurred to me that the following pages, descriptive of a five months' journey through that extremely interesting country, may perhaps be of some use to those who are looking in the same direction. Moreover, many friends and acquaintances have, since my return, asked me for particulars of my tour; but, in the little time a busy man can spare, one cannot attempt to describe in conversation the different impressions received on visiting scenes of varied interest in Cape Colony, Natal, the Orange Free State, and the Transvaal; and it seemed therefore that it would be more agreeable to my friends and others if I put the narrative once for all into book form. To those at whose suggestion I first entertained the idea of visiting South Africa I give my sincere thanks for their advice, and also for the numerous recommendations and introductions with which they so kindly provided me. I can never forget the great

interest taken in my welfare by friends on the other side, added to the hospitality which cheers the wanderer in his loneliness when six or seven thousand miles from home for the first time in one's life.

July 28th, 1890.

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TO SOUTH AFRICA AND BACK.

CHAPTER I.

THE VOYAGE OUT.

In a trip to South Africa and back, during the latter part of last year and the beginning of this, I spent six months so agreeably that I often wished friends were nearer—that they were sharing with me the invigorating change of scene and climate. The freshening influence of the sea air, the complete separation from the daily round of business, and the animating incidents of rough country travelling would have been as welcome to them as they were to me. The voyage out is no longer the tedious and risky passage it was. In a few days the disagreeables of northern latitudes are left behind, and in delightful sunshine the waking hours are passed. The fine vessels of the Castle and Union Lines steam the distance in three weeks, bearing you safely through six thousand miles of ocean, and providing handsomely for your comfort and pleasure.

The vessel in which my passage was taken was the

Garth Castle, a worthy sea-boat, and a well-appointed floating hotel. You may, if you choose, go on board in dock at Blackwall, or you may join the ship in Dartmouth Harbour, saving a day, and exchanging for the river passage a journey by rail. Be guided by the time of the year and the state of the weather. It is a pleasant sail down the Thames and round the coast in the summer months; but in dull October, the month in which I set out, the railway journey is preferable. In Dartmouth Harbour the complement of passengers is made up, the mails are taken on board, and shore-going friends say good-bye. Then the stout ship, heading south-west, is soon rushing at full speed through the sea.

Settling down on board ship takes time; the motion of the vessel is new to you, you are not yet used to the construction of your bunk, and there is a squeamish feeling you must allow for; but insensibly this wears off, you get your sea-legs, you readily fall into the ways of things, and begin to enjoy the passage. We had a most companionable party of passengers on board—some returning colonists in high spirits, a contingent of hard-headed Scotchmen, a few health-seekers for Madeira, and a number of ladies and children. Turning out in the morning about six, you have your cup of coffee and a bath, and then there is before you a long day of delightful idling. The passengers distribute themselves about the deck in little knots. The smokers gather on the lee-side of the ship and yarn; the ladies, with books or work, make themselves

comfortable in ship's chairs; the children are rolling and tumbling about on the white, dry, holy-stoned deck; and for a time all goes merrily.

There is a break now and again for meals. These are the great events of the day; and if you be fit and well, you will do justice to them and thank Heaven. The morning sea-breeze has put a keen edge on your appetite, and there is no lingering behind when the bell rings for breakfast. The muster of course depends on the state of the weather, on the time that has elapsed since the ship left port, or on the ability of the passengers to get about. But assuming that the ship has been a few days at sea, and that she is steaming steadily, then there is a strong muster. Having neither newspapers nor letters to occupy your attention, ship's gossip is made much of. Other people's affairs, with which you wouldn't concern yourself on shore, interest you. Your own tongue loosens, and you too become talkative. You tell your neighbour all about yourself and your belongings, and of his belongings and himself you hear in turn. The colonists, having been "out," are of course much looked up to, and their "wrinkles" are carefully treasured. There are always some good stories told, and with these and nautical banter the breakfast hour comes to a close.

Being at sea, it is assumed that you are not able to hold out for more than three hours. For when "eight bells" are struck (noon) you go below for tiffin, a substantial meal for famishing passengers to be going on with. Then

at six o'clock the dinner-bell rings; and as though a strict fast had been kept for twenty-four hours, not a moment is lost in getting to your seat. The saloon looks at its best. The tables are gay with colour, the passengers are in good humour, and the waiting is faultless. Recollecting that no land is in sight, and that the ship is ploughing swiftly through deep water, you marvel at the wonderful resources of the steward. Fresh fruit and flowers are on the tables before you. The *menu* invites you to make an effort. Your favourite joints, dishes of tempting morsels, game, fowl, and all the *et ceteras* of a fashionable dinner are offered to you. One might suppose that when the cloth was drawn, and the passengers had cracked their nuts and jokes, there would be an end to the meals for one day; but later further provision is made against starvation. You have tea in the saloon; and afterwards, if you feel again the pangs of hunger, you can have something more.

The first land we sighted was Cape Finisterre. In crossing the Bay of Biscay the weather was squally, and we had a wet and uncomfortable time of it. The ship rolled and plunged a good deal, and some of us were glad enough to tuck ourselves comfortably in our berths. But the next day the weather cleared up, and we got about again. A number of belated birds were on the rigging; and an eagle, for some time perched on the main-brace, was an object of great interest to all on board. In approaching the Portuguese coast we left the squalls behind, and lounged about under the influence of a clear sky and genial sunshine.

CHAPTER II.

LISBON.

ALL hands were aroused at midnight as the steamer slowed and stopped at the mouth of the Tagus; and, on coming on deck in the morning, the magnificent panorama of Lisbon was coming in sight. For beauty of situation, as approached from the sea, the Portuguese capital is scarcely surpassed among European cities. It is on the north and west bank of the river, which widens out into a lake-like formation; and from almost the water's edge to the summit of the rising ground the city is built.

There was not much time for sight-seeing; but being one of a small party determined to see all that could be seen, we landed and engaged a guide. It is somewhere said that Lisbon was built on seven hills. It would, perhaps, be difficult to make this quite clear, so indistinct are the outlines; but if one may judge by the number of steep streets, and the ascents it is necessary to make to see objects of interest, there can be no doubt but that the

city spreads over many hills. We clambered up some quaint old streets to the cathedral, Basilica de Santa Maria. Though in some respects modernized—disfigured one should perhaps say—it is still the most interesting church in Lisbon. Outside black was hung for the late king, and there was a great crowd waiting for admission. Inside we could not get, and had to content ourselves with a good long look at the outside. It is a moderate-sized building, with two low western towers. As seen from without, the shafts to the openings in the towers, the windows of the tall ruined transept, and the round western doorway are fine relics of the ancient building, on the site of which the present edifice was reared. There are two ravens—discreditably thin and starved-looking—kept in a court-yard, originally part of the cloister, the object of keeping them being to acknowledge the good offices of the ravens said to have protected the relics of St. Vincent during their transportation from the Cape. But why starve them?

Our guide conducted us through the principal streets. The best shops are in the Rua Aurea Augusta Garrett, popularly called the Chiado, and the Praco do Rocio. Each trade occupies its own street in the lower part of the city; consequently the goldsmiths will be found in the Rua Aurea or Golden Street, the silversmiths in the Rua da Prata, the booksellers in Rua Augusta, and so on. This arrangement was planned at the re-building of Lisbon after the great earthquake. In the market I noticed an

abundance of fruit—apples, pears, grapes, bananas, and oranges. The Portuguese are fond of decorating their house-fronts with blue, white, and coloured tiles. Their tramways are light and rickety, and each car is drawn by three mules.

Of churches and palaces there seem no end. From the quarries of Peropinheiro and Extremoz a cretaceous marble is got, which is exceedingly effective in decorative work. In the rough it is white, but when polished shows a pinky hue. The temptation to use this marble is no doubt very great, and probably this accounts for the number of churches. One of these—the church and monastery of Belem—shows the last struggle of Gothic against Renaissance art in Portugal. It is certainly the most curious of the Lisbon churches, and visitors make a point of seeing it if they see nothing else.

On the site of this church once stood a small chapel, in which Vasco da Gama and his companions passed the night in prayer previous to their embarkation for India. And in gratitude for the success of that expedition it was determined by the king to erect a magnificent church. This was designed by an Italian, and the works were carried out with great rapidity. It is related that when the scaffolding of the nave was struck, the vaulted roof gave way and destroyed a number of the workmen. When the roof was re-erected, the architect became so much alarmed lest a similar accident occur again that he decamped. The king then gave orders that the scaffold-

ing should be removed by malefactors under sentence of death, with a promise of free pardon if they escaped. The building stood firm, and the workmen built themselves homes with the lumber which they removed, and became honest and useful members of society. So at any rate goes the story, and more unlikely conversions have taken place in the world.

Judging from what I saw of them, the Portuguese are now but a poor race. If they were ever comely, they have sadly deteriorated; for both men and women are unprepossessing, not to say ugly, which perhaps would be nearer the truth. The children are yellow and unhealthy-looking, giving one the impression that they are badly nourished. The workshops are open to the street, so you can walk in if you feel so disposed. We went into one—a potter's workshop—and saw the owner at work kneading his clay. But by this time there remained only about an hour to take lunch, see what we had missed, and get back to the ship. So our visit to the potter's was cut short; and, being hungry, the guide led the way to the Universal, a hotel in the Rua Nova do Carmo, facing the Chiado, where six of us and the guide lunched to our satisfaction. Lisbon is said to be an expensive place to live in; but the charge—9,000 reis—for seven famishing persons, in a hotel with a marble staircase, did not strike me as very high, being under six shillings per head in English money.

Having seen all that the limit of our stay would allow,

we returned to our vessel, saw the mails brought on board, and the moorings cast off. And as the vessel steamed down the Tagus we saw the Palace of the Ajuda, one of the royal residences—a vast structure in white marble, overlooking the suburb of Belem. The Necessidades we were told was a less pretentious palace ; but it is in the extreme west of the city, and we saw it not, nor the extinct convent of São Bento, in which the sittings of the Cortes are held. It would no doubt have been very enjoyable if we could have spent a few days driving in the neighbourhood of Lisbon ; but our destination was Cape Town, and our stay in the Tagus was consequently short.

CHAPTER III.

MADEIRA.

THERE was a good deal of rough water when we cleared the mouth of the river and stood out to sea; but we were becoming, if not experienced mariners, at any rate fitted to accommodate ourselves to the motion of the ship. And this is something to be thankful for. To be able to hold on or keep on one's legs as the vessel suddenly rolls to leeward, and as suddenly rights and rolls away again in the bed of a heavy sea, is an accomplishment it takes time to acquire. And therefore it was all the more creditable that we passengers were not found strewn about the saloon in pieces before we got into smooth water.

At dinner the "fiddles" were out. These are trays without bottoms, to keep the plates and glasses from tumbling about in rough weather. But even with these safeguards there is now and again a great crash of glass and crockery. The weather moderating, we had a pool on the ship's run—248 miles. It is a never-failing source of amusement. You pay a shilling, and get a ticket,

numbered. This is sold by auction to the highest bidder. Whoever buys pays double the price bid, of which one-half goes to the owner, and the other half to the pool. You can of course bid for your own ticket, if you wish to keep it. After the run the ticket numbered nearest the actual figures of the distance wins the prize, while ten above and ten below get second and third prizes, ten per cent. goes to Sailors Home or Charities. The thing was new to me; but I managed to get one-and-three back for my shilling, my ticket being supposed to have a fairly good chance.

We are steering a south-westerly course direct for the Madeiras. The sea is still rough, but there is a good wind, and with all sails set the good ship is ploughing along at a great rate of speed. The increasing heat has brought out the awning, and there is an electric lamp fitted up on deck for use in the evening. After dinner the steward's band plays, some of the passengers sing, and for an hour or so we have a capital vocal and instrumental concert. Then we gather in little parties for a last pipe and a chat before turning in for the night. At eleven lights are put out, at which hour most of the passengers are asleep in their bunks.

The next morning Madeira is in sight. The eastern point first presents itself to view, jutting out into the narrow and jagged promontory of St. Lorenzo, upon an islet of which point is erected the Pharol, or lighthouse. Madeira lies on the right. Away on the left, at a distance

of some twelve miles, are the Desertas, three islands whose precipitous rocks and sterile ridges prevent habitation and have led to their name. As first seen Madeira seems to offer but a rugged welcome. Innumerable hills, lofty and peaked, and deeply pierced by ravines, form the prospect, and visual evidence of the volcanic nature of the mass is everywhere afforded. As the steamer passes swiftly along, however, the view loses its sterility. The green valley of Machio, with the townlet near its mouth, comes into sight; and soon after follows Santa Cruz, the most important place in the island after Funchal, the capital: the latter lies a dozen miles farther on. And as the steamer passes close to shore, the richly wooded slopes now to be seen, which contrast finely with the vivid colouring of the exposed rocks facing the sea, begin to give an idea of the true beauties of the island.

The view of Funchal itself, its white-walled and red-tiled houses lying in a close cluster near the bay, and becoming more scattered and interspersed with foliage as the eye takes in the range of the surrounding hills, is a sight not to be forgotten. It is truly a little paradise we have come to. The water is of brilliant ultra-marine. There is not a cloud in the sky, and the sunshine pervades the whole place. Many hired boats put off from the shore; the first to come alongside being the awning-covered gig of the port sanitary official, who is charged to see that we have a clean bill of health. Next we have the custom-house officers; then the agents of the

steamer; and after them the seafaring population. A flotilla of small craft containing traders or touts makes for the gangway; and the air is filled with a babel of sound as the boats bob up and down with the waves, and struggle for a place at the ship's ladder. Cross over to the other side of the deck, and you will find the water alive with copper-coloured youngsters, diving like fishes for small coins flung to them, and shrieking for more in a strange compound of English and Portuguese. Their dexterity is amazing. The only chance of their missing the coin is when two or more of the lads collide under water and fight for its possession.

From the bumboats swarthy fellows, clad in white shirt and trousers, scramble up by ropes, boathooks, or any other means at hand, and take the deck by storm. In a twinkling you have specimens of Madeira needlework spread invitingly before your eyes; bananas, oranges, and other fruits dandled temptingly below your nose; views of the island thrust upon you; and your patronage besought for the famous basket-work chairs and couches made in the island. If one were returning, it would be as well to make some purchases; but passengers outward bound keep their money in their pockets.

We were ready of course for a run on shore. There was a good deal said before we started in regard to the predatory and grasping habits of the natives; but, to do them justice, I must say that I have been as badly fleeced at many an English watering-place. The noise and

tenacity are perhaps greater in Madeira, but the barefaced fleecing is not much worse. Getting ashore, we set out to see about us. And rejecting bullock-waggons as a means of getting over the ground quickly, we selected and mounted some likely looking ponies, and in single file wound our way up the main streets. Having only a few hours' stay in the island, we could spare no time for long excursions, of which there are many, and we were told delightful. Making for the high lands, on which are the Mount Church and the Quinta da Vigia, we got a good view of the country around, and the sea stretching far into the ocean's solitude. At their moorings in the roadstead are the good ship *Garth Castle*, one of the Union Line boats, and a French gunboat. The Quinta da Vigia is a beautiful garden of tropical shrubs and flowers, in which it would be a pleasure to remain. But, then, the vegetation of the whole island is luxuriant. In addition to such delicious tropical fruit as the mango, the banana, and the guava, peas and beans and potatoes are plentiful. The strawberry is also in abundance, but it was too late in the season to get any.

The island ponies are very sure-footed, as we found to our comfort. Down we rode the precipitous streets, paved mostly with slippery stones, without a spill or even a slip, and, clattering into the town again, made noise enough for a company of cavalry. Two of the fellows leading our party galloped rather sharply in some of the principal thoroughfares, and, happening to pass the police-

station, were, notwithstanding the remonstrances of the guides, taken into custody. The gendarmes are officious, and they declared that we had created a disturbance and endangered public safety. There was nothing for it but to go to the town-hall, which we did, escorted by the riff-raff of the place. My guide tried to dissuade me from going too; but it was against the grain to see friends "run in" without standing by to render what assistance I could. At the town-hall we all dismounted, and were brought before the chief clerk, the pony-boys following, and as many of the idle townsfolk as could squeeze in. The affair being a gratuitous entertainment, it was well attended. The policemen told their story, then the pony-boys, and then the Englishmen; and after this, as they all chattered at the same time, it was really impossible to make out what the row was about. The chief clerk listened perfectly unmoved. After a few minutes' delay an interpreter was unearthed, the funniest little puddingey sort of a man, with a thick crop of curly, woolly hair.

The whole affair was at some length explained to him. Then he made an offer of apologies; but the chief clerk looked as hard as nails, and no doubt was making up his mind to spoil our fun for the time being. Fortunately, however, the mayor of the town turned up, and he, being a sensible man, accepted our explanations and apologies, and permitted us to depart. It struck me that it was all a piece of Portuguese nastiness. The Delagoa Bay dispute was rankling in their minds, and

to the official mind it seemed desirable to make the most of it.

Some of the passengers went up in bullock-cars, and returned at the risk of their necks in sledges; but to those who, like myself, had a touch of liver, the ponies seemed more attractive. The climate is undoubtedly wonderfully curative. "No European climate," says Mr. Crawford, "has so mild and equable a winter, is so free from chilling winds, sudden and excessive cold; in no European station are the nights so warm, the noonday sun so little scorching. At no European town is vegetation of all kinds so luxuriant and so lovely; in no other health resort is such varied scenery to be enjoyed; and in no climate probably in the whole world is it possible for an invalid to take so much out-door exercise in the course of the year; in none is dust on the roads so absolutely unknown; and what is perhaps of more importance than anything else, in none is locomotion, by means of ponies, palanquins, and sleighs, so easy and so suitable to sick persons."

The Cathedral is well worth a visit. It is a cruciform church of flamboyant date, with painted, grained roof, slender pillars, round-headed clerestory, carved stalls, and deeply recessed western porch with good doorway. The English club is in the Rua dos Inglezes, and is fairly well supplied with books and papers. There are three English hotels, one of which—the Santa Clara—is situated half a mile from the beach, and is at an elevation of

several hundred feet, from which a splendid view of the town and harbour of Funchal is obtained.

After a most agreeable run on shore, in really delightful weather, we all returned to the ship, and in high spirits at dinner discussed the incidents of the day. Tourists in these latitudes usually pay a visit to Santa Cruz, Teneriffe, a distance of about two hundred and fifty miles from Funchal. The famous Peak, which rises to a height of 12,180 feet, becomes visible about ninety miles off. When first seen, it looks like a deep bank of haze or cloud in the sky. The outline grows stronger and more defined as you approach, and the slowly moving clouds that hang round the giant mountain may chance to roll away sufficiently to enable you to obtain a view of the shoulder. It is rare, however, that the whole extent of the Peak is visible, and the probability is that when the lofty ridges of the island itself show up above the horizon a portion of the Peak will be again hidden by cloud.

The steamer being a mail-carrier, every minute counts; consequently time did not permit of our visiting Teneriffe or any of the Canary Islands. But to some of our passengers these were familiar enough, and what we could not see ourselves was described to us with much graphic force. With that, needless to say, we had to be content; but were I going to the Cape again, I would be inclined to spend a week in Teneriffe and the Canaries. They are, perhaps, the most remarkable group of health resorts in the world. At Orotava the scenery is magni-

ficent. On the east and west it is encircled by ranges of picturesque mountains, descending from the great chain which culminates in the great Peak. And in the vale there are the relics of a splendid prosperity long since vanished. You see the decaying walls of old palaces which architects and antiquarians have made pilgrimages to gaze upon. They are of wood—the native pine, a tree of such extraordinary durability, that the balconies, although in some cases two centuries old, are in a condition of almost perfect repair. The wood is unpainted, its highly resinous nature serving to render artificial coating unnecessary. Carved in designs partly Italian and partly Mauresque, the balconies are works of singular beauty, the intricacy of their pattern being as notable as the delicacy of their workmanship.

But I am wandering from our course. We are now at sea, and the land which seemed but an hour or two ago so lovely is sinking out of sight.

CHAPTER IV.

THE RUN TO THE CAPE.

We were not to touch at St. Helena or Ascension; consequently there was no chance of another turn on shore till we reached Cape Town. Being now thrown on our own resources for amusements, we appointed a committee to entertain us. And as there were several old hands on the committee, they made a very good playground of the ship's deck. We had cricket and quoits in the morning and afternoon, and concerts in the evening. The quoits, I should perhaps explain, are thick rings of rope, and they are either thrown on to a peg, or on numbered squares chalked out on deck. It looks an easy game; but try it on board ship in a heavy sea. The "tug of war" is always great fun; and the "sweep" on the distance sailed excites much interest. The concerts, need I say, are highly popular. What, indeed, in the form of entertainment would not be popular with not a sail in sight, or a peak to break the complete circle of the horizon?

The steward's band played capital dance music. And to it ladies and gentlemen merrily waltzed and polkaed. One evening the band played "aft," and the next evening "for'a'd," so that all classes of passengers were pleased. The electric lamp lighted up the deck brilliantly; the nights were warm; and the good ship was speeding swiftly on her voyage. All this put the passengers in gay humour, and there was much laughing and joking at the figures some of us cut in the dance. Those who could, sang or recited, doing anything to amuse. I remember hearing my own voice in the "Holy Friar," and I wondered how it had come about that I should be singing in a ship's saloon outward bound for Africa. With songs and dance music the time passed very pleasantly, and we were all loth to separate when the hour came to turn in.

The heat was now very great, and one thought of Sidney Smith's wish that he could take off his flesh and sit in his bones. I daresay many of us would have given a good deal for an hour or two in a nice cool tub; but, as one of the passengers said, hot though it was, we should soon be out of it, which was a good deal more than passengers in sailing vessels could say. On board a steamer you make headway, and unless what wind there is be astern you can find a cool place in which to breathe for a bit; but on board a sailing ship while she is drifting in the tropics the heat is almost stifling. Before this we had overhauled our kit, and rigged ourselves out in suitable garments, making the weight

of covering we had to carry about us as light and as loose as possible.

As we drew nearer the equatorial line we had our first experience of a tropical storm. It came on suddenly, and was as quickly over; but while it lasted it was awe-inspiring. It was preceded by an almost painful stillness, and a dense bank of cloud had gathered ahead. The air became very thick and heavy, and the heavens seemed darkening; then the bank of cloud ahead opened, disclosing great sheets of flame; and in an instant the lightning was playing around the ship. This lasted a few seconds, and then the rain fell; and it fell in torrents, as though a waterspout had burst above us. The wind whistled shrilly, and, filling the sails, the ship was driven along at a great rate of speed, the water still pouring down and flooding the decks, to rush through the scuppers into the sea. In a few minutes all was over; the sky cleared, the air cooled, and the sense of oppressiveness was gone.

Once more we could sleep comfortably in our bunks; but we were up again at six in pyjamas, taking the morning "constitutional," or superintending (unauthorized) the holy-stoning of the decks. Pyjamas, I should perhaps explain, are a kind of night-dress or sleeping suit, used in hot countries. The suit is made of silk, flannel, or cotton, according to the taste of the wearer, and in all the colours of the rainbow. Being perfectly free and easy-fitting, though amply covering the body, you may step from

your berth to the deck with an easy mind. Pyjamas are worn all over the East, and now pretty generally worn on board ship. But before the breakfast bell rings you must be in your own proper garments again.

The line was crossed the next morning, and the voyage was half over. This we felt was doing very well. In a little time longer it would be over, and the friendly party of passengers scattered. Although glad that we should be able soon to stretch our legs on shore, it was felt that the saying "good-bye" to so many good people, with whom we had passed so many pleasant hours, would be somewhat of a wrench. Some we might see again, others perhaps never.

As we drew more and more into southern latitudes the talk was of what we proposed to do on landing. The journeys we proposed to take were discussed, and the plans we had made for going up country. The old stagers on board, knowing all about it, gave us some excellent tips, and cordially invited us to visit them, should we find ourselves anywhere near their habitations. Such men (I mean the colonists who were our fellow-passengers)—shrewd, plucky, and generous—are the backbone of South Africa. They believe that there is a great future for the country, and are backing their opinions with their money, and throwing into it immense energy. Nor can there be any doubt as to the ultimate advancement and prosperity of South Africa. When you see wealthy men returning from England, who have drawn all or nearly all their

interests within the Colony, and who have made their permanent home therein, depend upon it they are confident that in South Africa are fields for English enterprise second to none in the world.

Sighting Cape Verde, we knew that the extreme western point of the African Continent was passed. The cape is a peninsular projection on the Senegambian coast, terminating in a tongue of low flat rocks, which in a few parts rise eight or ten feet above sea-level. At night the position is indicated by a white half-minute light and a stationary light in red. The islands of the same name are out of our course; they belong to the Portuguese, and not only pay their way, but yield a surplus revenue, which the minister draws into the exchequer. Perhaps it would be hardly worth while mentioning these islands but for this: that they have a tithe question which causes at times no little commotion. It appears that the tithes for the support of the Church were at some time seized by Government. A pledge was given to maintain the clergy; but the latter say that if they had to depend upon what they get from the Government they would starve. Knowing how badly, in this matter, the Government have behaved, the people are trying to get the tithes into their hands; but needless to say that they have not yet succeeded.

It has been getting daily cooler since crossing the line, and there is a general rise of spirits. In the extreme heat you are soon fatigued, sleep at night deserts you,

and, except to crawl below for meals, you feel incapable of any exertion. After steaming into the trades, however, the langour was thrown off, and we began again to be interested in amusements. A stage was rigged up in the saloon, and we had charades. Then a mock trial. A jolly looking, amiable Welshman was supposed to bring an action for breach of promise against one of the young ladies on board. A barrister, one of the passengers, was Serjeant Buzfuz, and very amusing was the cross-examination. Getting your hair cut also helps to while away the time. One of the sailors was a capital hair-cutter, and the workmanlike way in which he handled our heads gave great satisfaction. We were now able to appear in the Colony neatly cropped.

I had taken with me, carefully packed in one of my cabin trunks, owing to the great care of a too thoughtful wife, two boxes of night-lights. Little did I think, in stowing them away, that they would run into oil in the heat; but so it turned out. Papers and clothes suffered considerably of course; and I would suggest to intending voyagers, as the result of my experience, that they leave night-lights at home. If, however, they must take them, they had better bring them bottled. This reminds me that I ought to say something about a South African kit; what to bring with you, and what not to bring. I don't know whether I am quite competent to advise, but I should say that the smaller your kit is the better. You must take a "claw hammer" (I mean a dress-coat); and,

for comfort's sake, so me pairs of socks, under flannels, two pairs of pyjamas, and a few shirts. But there is no need of more than a couple of strong tweed suits—one in wear, and the other ready for wear. Of course much depends upon what you are going to do, and how far you propose to travel up country; but visiting South Africa as I did, merely to recruit my health, and partly with an eye to business, I found that a very small kit would serve all purposes.

If, however, you mean to see something of African hunting, you will require a coat thick enough to resist the African thorn, and nothing will serve your purpose so well as buff moleskin. With breeches of Bedford cord, brown leather "field" boots, and some thick flannel shirts, you will be well provided; and I am told that as head covering the best is the "Boer" hat, a thick, soft felt with a high crown and a broad brim. But, as I have said, the objects I had in view required no special provision in the way of clothing; and I was very glad of it, when I found what rough country travelling I had before me.

Sundays on board ship are, I must confess, not the most cheerful of days. On the *Garth Castle* the captain read the service, and the singing was praiseworthy; but let the service be what it may, it is a trial to fix one's attention upon it. Somehow your thoughts wander homewards; instead of listening to the reader in a devotional spirit, you are picturing to yourself familiar home

scenes—scenes in which there are little figures and faces you have sorely missed; and it is wonderful how vivid these become, though far away over the trackless seas! One should be devotional at sea; but I have noticed that there is usually some expression of relief when the service is over, and the worshippers are free to go to their pipe or their book. I should be sorry, however, if there were any falling off in Sunday observance on board ship, for it is a good thing. One's thoughts may wander; but if they wander homewards they are not in bad company. Except the necessary work in navigating the ship there is nothing else done by the crew; consequently they have on Sunday a longer rest than on any other day. And who would grudge this to poor Jack? There is no rest, however, if there be heavy weather, and early on Monday morning he is again at work.

Being now within a few hours' sail of port, the passengers both fore and aft are in high spirits. Some are going home. They are anxious to hear what has taken place in the Colony since they saw the latest news in London. Recollect that we have been three weeks out of the world—that is, the busy, bustling world in which money is made and lost. True, we landed at Lisbon and Madeira, but these visits don't count; and for all that we could tell there might have been an outbreak of war. Possibly, too, in precisely those parts of the country where we expected to find peace and plenty. Indeed, there was no guessing what might or might not

have happened; and in consequence everybody was restless —eager at one moment to land, and at another loth to leave the good ship.

While on board we knew that it was no use troubling ourselves about the future. Nothing that we could do until the ship arrived would help to push things ahead. So it seemed reasonable to extract as much amusement as we could on the passage. But with ship's entertainments we had now done, for a time at least, and had to turn our attention into other grooves. I confess that I began to wonder much what my fortune would be in the new country I was about to visit. To me it was all a new experience. The long sea voyage, the close intimacy with people who had so recently been utter strangers, and the feeling that an ocean separated me from home made me seem unsettled. But this feeling was soon thrown off in the bustle of preparation. Everybody was getting his or her things together, or talking and laughing with friends. It was agreed that we had had, on the whole, a pleasant passage, and that the *Garth Castle* was one of the swiftest and most comfortable of boats.

There is a rush to the rail when the look-out reports "land ahead," and in a few minutes the Cape Peninsula is descried rising boldly from the sea. Later Saldanha Bay is passed, and Robbin Island with its sad memories, this rock being now a place of confinement for lepers. Steaming on, the vessel enters Table Bay, towering above

which is the great Table Mountain, with its massive wall and broad, flat top. To the right is the Lion's Head, on which is the signal station. To the left is the Devil's Peak, in the valley between which and Table Mountain is Cape Town, dwarfed by the giant group.

The vessel steams slowly to the docks, and the long voyage is ended.

CHAPTER V.

CAPE COLONY.

THERE is a sense of relief felt in being able to stretch out one's legs again on shore. And though, as it were, on the other side of the world, we are on no alien soil. The British flag is floating proudly over Government House, English soldiers are in the Castle, and the residents—well, many of them—are our own kith and kin. True, there is a great variety of race noticeable in the streets. Malays, Fingoes, Bushmen, Indians, Kaffirs, and half-castes are all represented; but on the wharves and in the business thoroughfares English, Scotch, and Irish colonists rub shoulders with you at every turn, and the hearty welcome given to you is unmistakably British.

First impressions are proverbially untrustworthy; but I daresay most travellers will agree with me that the general aspect of Cape Town does not impress one favourably, and also that this impression does not rub off on closer acquaintance. The first founders—the Dutchmen—

laid out the town with mathematical precision; and straight lines, and right angles, squares, and parallelograms are the distinctive features of both streets and buildings. Many of the houses are old flat-roofed Dutch dwellings; and, except in the principal streets, there are only a few really well-built shops. But, having said this, I ought to add that the villas and gardens on the outskirts, and the plantations clothing the base of the mountains, go a long way to redeem the town from the cast-iron look of uniformity against which the eye rebels.

And in the suburban resorts there is some very beautiful scenery. On the eastern side of Table Mountain, Newlands, Claremont, and Wynberg are delightful sylvan retreats. With a party we drove to Wynberg, a favourite resort of city merchants and officials; and as our way led through a glorious avenue of oaks a mile long, need it be said that that drive is in our memory still? On Wynberg Hill there are clumps and thickets of silver trees, and from it enchanting views of hill and valley, with a grand background of mountain. On the day following we drove to Kalk Bay, noted for its warm waters; and along the route the glimpses of shaggy wood and of breezy flats, of verandahed retreats and shady groves, were an agreeable surprise.

Having but little time to spare for sightseeing in Cape Town, I missed some delightful drives, closing my visit by going over the Houses of the Cape Parliament. These are the handsomest public buildings in the Colony,

a description of which I extract from Mr. John Noble's excellent handbook. "The principal front measures 264 feet in length; it is divided, roughly speaking, into a central portico, leading into the grand vestibule, the two debating chambers, and side pavilions. The portico is of massive dimensions, and is approached by a commanding flight of granite steps, which runs round three sides of it. The pavilions are relieved by groups of pilasters with Corinthian capitals, and are surmounted by domes and ventilators. The whole of the ground floor, up to the level of the main floor, has been built of Paarl granite, which makes a most suitable base. The building above this is of red brick, relieved by pilasters and window dressing of Portland cement, the effect being very pleasing and gratifying to the eye.

"The interior accommodation for the business of the two Houses of Parliament is most complete, and arranged with a view to careful comfort and convenience. Besides the debating chambers, which are sixty-seven feet in length, by thirty-six feet in width (only ten feet in length and width less than the House of Commons), there is a lofty hall of stately appearance, with marble pillars and tesselated pavement, which forms the central lobby or grand vestibule. Adjoining this is the Parliamentary Library, a beautiful apartment fifty-three feet by thirty-two, with galleries above each other reaching to the full height of the building. There are a number of committee rooms and spacious offices for the President and Speaker

and officers of the Legislature. Refreshment and luncheon rooms, as well as smoking and billiard rooms, complete the arrangements for the comfort of members. For the accommodation of the public there are roomy galleries for strangers, ladies, distinguished visitors, and the press. The lighting is effected by gas as well as electricity; the House of Assembly being illuminated by a tasteful equipment of Edison's incandescent lamps, placed in convolvulus-shaped glass cups on pendent brass electroliers. The ground floor of the building is occupied by the premier department of the Government, that of the Colonial Secretary, and by fire-proof vaults, in which the records of Parliament and the archives of the Colony are deposited." The cost has been £220,000.

Through rows of old oaks extending three-quarters of a mile you reach the Government Gardens; on the left side of this avenue is Government House, in which Her Majesty's representative resides. The Castle is a curiosity, being, in fact, an ancient citadel of pentagonal form, with ravelins, glacis, ditches, gate, sally-port, and all the other paraphernalia of the old fortifications. The bell on the gate-tower bears date 1697. Strange, is it not, to see this old fortress, centuries out of our time, still the head-quarters of the military forces of the Colony? The Castle and Government House and the old flat-roofed Dutch dwellings are memorials of the past not without interest to the traveller.

It is worth remembering that the seasons at the Cape

are in reverse order to those in the northern hemisphere. Thus the Cape summer is from December to February, autumn from March to May, winter from June to August, and spring from September to November. Having landed in the middle of November, I may say that I arrived in the spring of the year. Ripe strawberries were brought in daily from Stellenbosch; and though one missed the flavour of the English fruit, still they were temptingly cold, and fresh with the morning dew. Think of it, strawberries on British soil in November! But I must not linger in Cape Town. Some of my fellow-passengers have already left, and a party of fifteen leave to-night for Kimberley. They are going by rail. To-morrow I go on board the steamer bound for Port Elizabeth.

CHAPTER VI.

PORT ELIZABETH.

THE voyage to the commercial capital of South Africa was a rougher experience than I quite liked. But it was worth a good deal of sea shaking to get even passing glimpses of historic points; and in particular to see the great cliff that bears the name of the Cape of Good Hope. And as the vessel steams on past Simon's Bay and Danger Point, the rock is pointed out on which the *Birkenhead* was lost. On that ill-fated ship there were four hundred and thirty soldiers, and when she sank they went down with her, standing shoulder to shoulder, as though on parade. Cape Agulhas is the most southerly point of Africa, and the stormiest; and as this is rounded it is seen that the coast is well defined and interesting. But until we arrived in Mossel Bay no stop was made, and then only to land passengers and mails.

Mossel Bay is a port of some consequence midway between Table and Algoa Bays. And it seems to be well

equipped for landing and loading cargoes. The town is called Aliwal South; but there was no time to go on shore, and from what I could gather on board there was not much to see even if there had been time. Besides, I was anxious to make a start for up country, which I proposed to do from Port Elizabeth. Therefore I remained on board ship until she steamed into Algoa Bay and landed her passengers. One was glad enough to see in the well-built and well-paved town evidence everywhere of English wealth and energy. That this is more noticeable in Port Elizabeth than in any other town in Africa is, perhaps, not so surprising. For one thing, the first settlers were English immigrants. The year 1820 in England was one of great commercial depression and consequent distress, and Parliament determined to relieve this suffering in a really sensible manner. The sum of £50,000 was voted from Imperial resources to cover the expense of transporting certain families from England to Africa. Each family received a freehold grant of land of one hundred acres, and the descendants of these families have made Port Elizabeth what it is. There were great sufferings and hardships borne by the early pioneers, and three times since the first settlement the colonists have undergone the miseries and dangers of Kaffir invasions. So that for many years they had a rough time of it, during which enormous sacrifices were demanded. But their pluck and enterprise carried them through their difficulties, and have borne abundant fruit

since; indeed, they may say, with pardonable pride, that they have made another Liverpool in Africa.

Then a great sheep-farming industry was developed. An enormous trade has been done in wool, the profits from which have been employed—at any rate to a great extent—with great public spirit in promoting the welfare of both the town and the province. For two or three miles along the water-side, and up the sloping hill ascending from it, and on the brow of the height above there rise in succession warehouses, stores, manufactories, shops, offices (each with a flagstaff in front), dwelling-houses, churches, schools, hospitals, and other buildings of every description and variety of architecture. The municipal and commercial buildings, the railway establishments and connections, and the markets, squares, and so forth, are all such as any community would be proud of. At any rate, it was a pleasure to see the evidences of so much Anglo-Saxon activity and foresight.

I put up at the Grand Hotel, and was very well treated. My quarters were in a detached part of the establishment, away from the hotel proper, being a cottage with a verandah in front, furnished, for South Africa, decently in ash, and accommodating myself and belongings comfortably. They adopt the Indian word "tiffin" for "lunch," and provide amply for your wants. Some business friends—Messrs. Mackie, Dunn, & Co.—extended colonial hospitality to me, and these and other friends made my visit one of great enjoyment. And what added

seemed fairly well content with their lot. Whether they were looking forward to the time when they, too, could dress in muslin or light calico, and carry on delightful flirtations on the lawn-tennis ground, I would not like to say.

The fashionable quarter is on what is termed the "Hill"—a flat tableland on the terraced ground above the main street. Its aspect and surroundings are very pleasant and enjoyable, as this height is generally fanned by fresh breezes from the sea. Many superior mansions and pretty villa residences have been erected here. There is a good club, and some handsome churches, and on the open flat beyond the Hill there is an attractive park—St. George's—laid out and maintained by the corporation of the town. In the Botanical Gardens are agreeable walks, through avenues of trees, shrubs, and flowering plants. There is also a fine conservatory, and there are water-basins, and grassy plots. There is a tramway to the park.

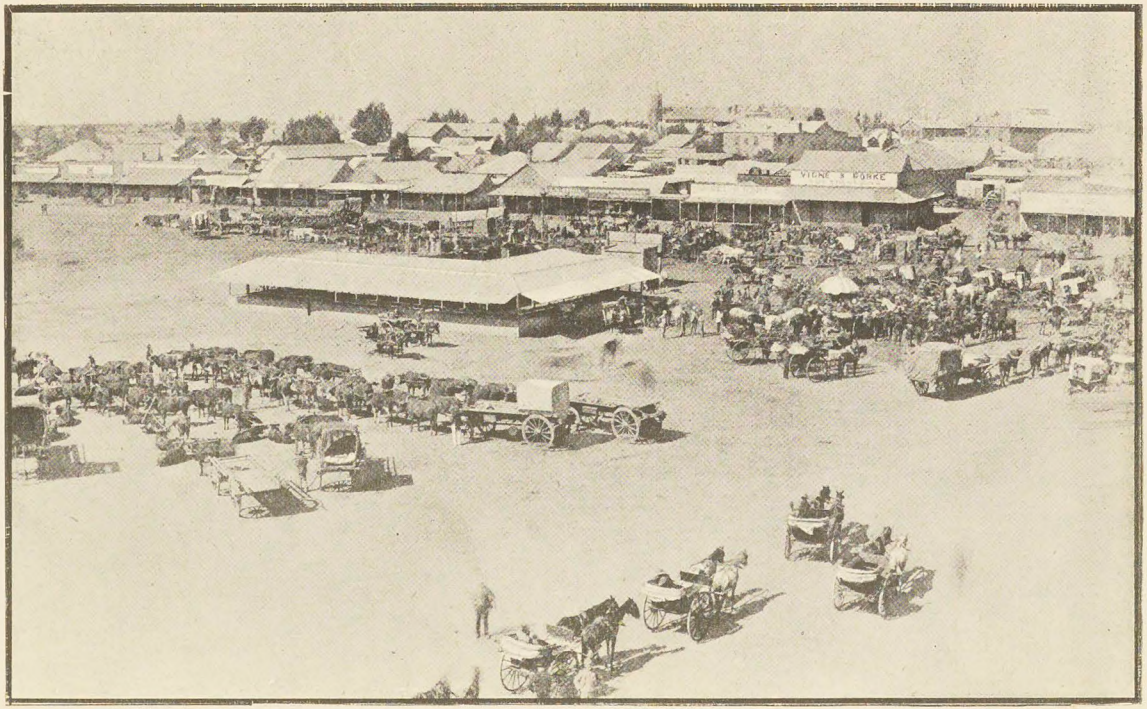
The country about Port Elizabeth is very bare and uninviting; but there are some localities, such as the Red House on the banks of the Zwartkop River, and the coastlands of Emerald Hill, and Van Staden's River, which afford suburban retreats. I had heard a good deal of Uitenhage, a town within an hour's reach by rail, to which the Bayonians (so the Port Elizabeth people are called) go now and then for a change. You see some characteristics of the old Dutch style, and very pleasant

surroundings. The old Dutch families appear to be reserved and reluctant to admit strangers; but I was told that once you get over this outer crust, and get them to begin to talk, they presently become courteous and hospitable, and part with you hoping to see you again.

CHAPTER VII.

KIMBERLEY IN GRIQUALAND.

My next move was to the diamond fields, though not, I should add, either as a digger or a speculator. I was curious to see the famous region, and ascertain for myself how matters stood. The railway journey from Port Elizabeth to Kimberley is one of two nights and a day. This, no doubt, is marvellously expeditious compared with what travelling inland was a few years ago, when the only means of conveyance were bullock-waggons. But with even this comforting reflection I found the journey exceedingly wearisome. It is four hundred and eighty-four miles, and for a long distance up hill and down dale, the train winding slowly round range after range of hills, and in much the same circuitous way making the descent. Having the compartment to myself throughout the long dusty day, the journey seemed unending, and it was seldom interesting. Only at rare intervals were there signs of cultivation, and even these hardly relieved the monotonous prospect from the carriage windows. Now



MARKET SQUARE, KIMBERLEY.

and then a flock of sheep, a few goats, an ostrich farm, a plantation of trees, a sheet of water, came in sight; but for the greater part of this time there was only veldt—or "felt," as it is pronounced. At De Aar Junction we joined the Cape Town train, and after another dreary run we arrived at Kimberley.

Arriving at five o'clock in the morning, I was not much impressed with the appearance of the town. And later, when looking round after getting rid of the dust and fatigue of travel, I saw there was room for improvement. It seemed a higgledy-piggledy place, with much dirt and untidiness manifest in the back settlements of the houses. I was rather surprised at this; for Kimberley is the inland terminus of the railway system, and has advanced from the position of a mushroom camp to that of a permanent mining centre, presenting an industrial activity which compares favourably with any portion of the Colony. But no doubt much that is distasteful and offensive will gradually disappear as the administration of the town improves.

The population of the town and the adjacent mining townships is computed at thirty thousand, more than one-half of whom are whites. The corrugated iron houses which were so conspicuous a few years back are now being displaced by more substantial dwellings. There are some handsome bank premises, and the Kimberley Club-house is considered one of the best in South Africa. The High Court of Griqualand, the Post and Telegraph Offices,

and the Town Hall are very spacious and commodious buildings. There are churches belonging to all denominations; and there is an admirably managed institution—Carnarvon Hospital—where there is extensive accommodation for both European and coloured patients, and convalescent wards for the better class of invalids able to pay for attendance.

The streets and roads, which extend over a distance of about twenty miles, are in some parts roughly laid out, on the whole, kept in good order. The jewellers' and drapers' establishments are fully as attractive as some of those of the same traders in English cities; and there is an air of business and activity all over the place. I was told that the drainage of the town had been much improved; but this does not appear to be Dr. Fuller's opinion, if one may judge from what he says in his book, to which later I will refer. There is a plentiful water supply, brought in from the Vaal River, and available to the inhabitants for household and garden purposes. The lighting of the town is effected by thirty-two electric Brush lights of two thousand candle-power each. The daily morning market is generally a busy scene, crowded by groups of dealers and waggons, with their long teams of oxen laden with produce from the Orange Free State, Bechuanaland, the Transvaal, and the far interior up to the Zambesi region.

One of the sights is to see the brokers on the "Stoep" of the Central Hotel doing business after their dinner. They are mostly young Jews, with wits as keen as razors.

The scene is certainly very lively, and one evening when I was there a Salvation Army woman was trying to sell the young brokers *War Crys*. Perhaps the latter needed the *War Crys;* but though they gave the woman money, they chaffed her a good deal, and the impression one gathered was that she was in the wrong place. With the business refreshments are considerably mixed up, and these are expensive at Kimberley. Whisky-and-soda cost one-and-sixpence, soda and lime-juice one shilling, a small bottle of beer eighteenpence, and a glass of ale sixpence. A bath in which there were only three pails full of water cost me a shilling. One should of course recollect that Kimberley is six hundred miles from the Cape, and that the cost of carriage is very serious.

The hotel at which I put up should have a word. One half is newly built of brick, the front is imposing, and there are good stairs and bedrooms. The other half—or what one would say was the original structure—adjoined, and was made of corrugated iron. It was really a large dining-hall with bedrooms off it. The offices were a succession of sheds of all sizes, with very much to be desired. The flies were in legion; and go-ahead though Kimberley undoubtedly was, the occupiers had not, so far as I knew, a fly-paper amongst them.

Not being a medical man, I am somewhat loth to speak of Kimberley as a health resort, and yet one ought to say something about it in that respect. Perhaps, if I extract Dr. Fuller's opinion, it will serve all purposes.

Dr. Arthur Fuller, of Kimberley, says: "The town is indeed absolutely devoid of the beautiful, either in its buildings or in its unpicturesque surroundings. Nor can one strongly recommend as a health resort a place with no drainage at all, a fever of its own, and a death-rate variously estimated at from fifty to seventy per thousand. And yet, in spite of these disadvantages, one meets in Kimberley not a few consumptive persons doing their daily work and earning comfortable incomes, to whom life in the moister parts of the Colony and Europe would be impossible. The large death-rate is due largely, I believe, to two factors: the large number of mining accidents amongst the natives, and the unhealthiness of the climate for young children.

"I should advise no one to select Kimberley who can afford to study health only. But those who are unable to do this, and are seeking employment in so large a business centre, will find in Kimberley most of the comforts and luxuries of life, and may hope to prolong their lives. The climate is in all respects similar to that of the Orange Free State, its greatest drawback being the amount of dust with which the traffic and winds fill the atmosphere."

Soon after my arrival at Kimberley I joined some friends in an excursion to Bloemfontein (river of flowers), the principal town in the Orange Free State. The journey lasted from eighteen to nineteen hours, and was a rough one. This was partly owing to the state of

the road (or want of road), being simply the tracks made by the bullock-waggons going and coming. Sometimes you go over a track like freshly ploughed land, then you come to a part thick with ruts and furrows formed by the rain; but whether the track be rough or smooth on the post-waggon goes, and you have to look out for the jolt, bump, and whatsoever else there be to come. At night you have the added disadvantage of being unable to see; and when the road gets out of the level and the conveyance is tilted on the two side-wheels, you think the "spill" has come at last; but no, the waggon rights itself, and on you go at a fairly good trot. This is not kept up without much shouting; but to that and to the jolting you gradually shake down into a state of stolid endurance. Then you have the comforting reflection that there is an end to all things—even to a journey in the Orange Free State.

I was fairly entitled to a day's rest before returning. So I had a good look round the pretty little Dutch town, noting that it is well sheltered by the low hills by which it is surrounded, and that one could very pleasantly spend a month or two in it if the time could be spared. Bloemfontein is the capital of the Orange Free State, and possesses not only a cathedral, but a standing army. This is said to be the smallest in the world; horse, foot, and artillery numbering only thirty-five.

I find, in regard to Bloemfontein, somewhat opposing

medical testimony in the same book. According to Dr. Fuller, "Dr. Stollreither speaks well of its sanitary arrangements;" but, according to Dr. E. Symes Thompson, "the sanitation of Bloemfontein is bad." But, then, sanitation is not particularly advanced in any part of Africa; and, relatively speaking, it is probably as good in Bloemfontein as it is in any of the towns of the Cape Colony.

Need I say that the diamond fields interested me greatly? Before, however, I proceed to describe them, I think my readers would like to know how it came about that diamonds were found in South Africa. It may, therefore, be worth while to give them the following account.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DIAMOND FIELDS.

THE authentic version of the story how the diamond fields were discovered I believe to be this:—In 1867, John O'Reilly, a trader, was on his way to Colesberg from the junction of the Vaal and Orange Rivers. "I outspanned," he says, in the account given by Sir Henry Barkly, "at Mr. Nickerk's farm, where I saw a beautiful lot of Orange River stones on his table, and which I examined. I told Nickerk they were very pretty. He showed me another lot, out of which I at once picked the 'first diamond.' I asked him for it, and he told me I could have it, as it belonged to a Bushman by name of Daniel Jacobs. I took it at once to Hope Town, and made Mr. Chalmers, Civil Commissioner, aware of the discovery." The stone was sent for inspection to Dr. Atherstone, of Graham's Town, who wrote in reply: "I congratulate you on the stone you have sent me. It is a veritable diamond, weighs 21·4 carats, and is worth £500. It has spoiled all the jewellers' files in Graham's Town, and where that came from there must be lots more."

Two years later Van Nickerk secured from a Griqua or Hottentot a large stone, for which he gave the sum of £400, or live stock to about that value. The stone he sold almost immediately for £10,000. This was the famous "Star of South Africa." It weighed in the rough 83·2 carats, and now belongs to the Countess of Dudley. It is stated that £25,000 was given for it.

The news of this great "find" brought a "rush" of diggers to the Orange River; but no mine was then discovered. After careful prospecting on the Vaal River, it was found that the banks were rich in diamonds. A large population, numbering no less than ten thousand, were soon at work, spread along the river; but they do not appear to have been fortunate in their finds, neither the river diggings nor the newly opened mines being rich enough to be remunerative to so large an influx of workers with only primitive appliances at their disposal. Nor was there much improvement even upon the discovery of diamonds near to where the town of Kimberley now stands. To these and diggings on the farms of Du Toit's Pan and Bultfontein there was a rush; but this was soon over. And a more dreary existence can hardly be imagined than that of these early days. Comforts there were absolutely none. Not a single substantial dwelling afforded shelter from the burning sun; men lived under canvas, and the owner of an iron or wooden shanty was envied. If you crossed the street you trod ankle deep in sand, and probably before reaching

the other side a small dust storm in embryo had choked and blinded you. The dust and the flies and worse pervaded everywhere; they sat down with you to meals and escorted you to bed. This is the story of one who was on the diamond fields at the time. The want of good food and pure water, he goes on to say, brought on disease, and many a poor fellow who had expected to find an Eldorado succumbed to the fever, which threatened to become endemic. Yet the men who had subjected themselves to this sort of life were mostly fresh from the comforts of civilization.

There was an entire absence of the rowdy, uncouth class such as peopled the "roaring camps" of the Far West. The expense and difficulty of reaching the diamond fields even from the nearest towns of the Cape Colony kept rogues and loafers out of the place. Though distant only six hundred and fifty miles from Cape Town and five hundred from Port Elizabeth, the journey from the latter port occupied a month, and six weeks from the former. It had to be performed in a springless transport-waggon drawn by ten or sixteen bullocks, over roads that no description could convey the vileness of, and the cost per passenger was not less than £50.

Now all this is changed. The railway, which has placed the diamond fields within thirty hours' journey of the coast, now brings a supply of all the luxuries the Colony can produce; whilst the establishment of the Kimberley waterworks provides a constant store of good and cheap

water, which not only removes the greatest hardship of the early days, but gives an impetus to gardening, so that thousands of trees have been planted and vegetation in all directions promoted.

To the wealth drawn from the Kimberley diamond mine, in the first instance, the change may fairly be attributed. This, however, is only one of four considerable undertakings. In 1876 a new digging was discovered, two miles distant from Du Toit's Pan in a north-westerly direction, and situated on a farm named Vooruitzist, the property of one De Beer, from whom it was termed "Old De Beers." And on this same farm, in July 1871, the famous "Colesberg Kopje," or "De Beer's New Rush," as it was variously called, was discovered by a Mr. Rawstorne, of Colesberg, which town had thus the honour of giving its name to the richest mine in the world. By a Government proclamation issued three years later these diggings were converted into "mines," with the respective titles of "Du Toit's Pan Mine," "De Beer's Mine," and "Kimberley Mine." The Bultfontein diggings were not proclaimed a mine till 1882.

Kimberley mine lies due west of De Beer's; and Bultfontein mine is to the south-west of Du Toit's Pan. The centres of Kimberley and De Beer's mines are exactly one mile apart, the centres of De Beer's and Du Toit's Pan just over two miles, whilst the centres of Du Toit's Pan and Bultfontein are less than three-quarters of a mile.

A circle three and a half miles in diameter would enclose the whole of the four mines.

It may be as well to state that no one suspected, even after the four great mines had been successfully "rushed," what a vast depth of diamond-bearing rock they contained; they were supposed to be merely another kind of alluvial deposits, and consequently operations were at first conducted without thought of permanency. Nor was this surprising. There had been a good deal of money lost in diggings which had been opened with a flourish of trumpets. There were three to the westward of Kimberley mine so promising at the outset that in the first year the licence money amounted to £4,000. In the following year only half the licences were renewed, and within two years the diggings were practically abandoned. Large sums were lost in erecting costly machinery at a mine to the north-west of Kimberley, and at other spots declared to be rich may be seen evidence of abandoned undertakings.

No doubt the share mania in 1880-81 resulted in great losses to many investors in the diamond industry of South Africa. For the immense demand for mining shares set the prospectors at work searching for new mines, or trying to open up others, which, though previously known, had either never been worked or were already abandoned. Each morning paper announced the formation of some fresh company. Every owner of a bit of land declared that there were diamonds in it; even occupiers with little

more than back gardens tried to turn these to account. While the game lasted it was lively enough; but in the end it proved disastrous to thousands. The investing public found that they had lost their money, and then went up the cry that the diamond bubble had burst.

The bad, the worthless, the rotten schemes had burst, but not the sound and prosperous undertakings to which reference has already been made.

CHAPTER IX.

THE FAMOUS DIAMOND GROUP.

THE Kimberley mine is one of the wonders of the world. As I saw it, it was an immense hole in the centre of the town, displaying a gap of twenty-five or thirty acres. This had been excavated in the earth to the depth of about three hundred feet. All round the mouth were stages for the working of pumps, and the raising and discharging by means of winches of the diamond-bearing rock. From these stages were wire ropes to the bottom of the mine, along which buckets of rock and empties passed and repassed; while below and above an army of workers were toiling.

Need I say that an enormous sum of money had been spent in developing Kimberley mine before I saw it? To enable the reader to form some idea of the work of excavation alone, let me endeavour to describe briefly how the diamondiferous ground was reached. To begin with, the surface of the country is covered with red, sandy soil, varying from a few inches to a couple of feet

in depth; underneath this is a thin layer of calcareous turfa, never extending beyond a few feet; both these layers are of recent date. Beneath the lime the distinction between the mine proper and the outside rocks or "reef" first becomes apparent. The upper reef in Kimberley mine is a yellow shale, exhibiting many varieties of shade from grey to pink. This extended to a depth of thirty-five to fifty feet, beneath which, as the contents of the mine or diamond-bearing "pipe' were worked out, a layer of black carbonaceous shale was made visible. The strata of both shales are roughly horizontal, though much disturbed in places, and where cut through by the vertical "pipe" they have their edges turned sharply upwards, as by a pressure from below.

At a depth varying from two hundred and sixty to two hundred and eighty-five feet from the surface of the red sand the lower shale ceases, giving place to an unstratified basaltic rock—the "hard rock" of the miners. The extent of this hard rock is as yet unknown, but it has been ascertained that it encircles the entire mine, and the quantity of agate it contains renders it most expensive to sink through. It is believed that this diamond-bearing rock has been heaved up from a vast depth, the diamonds themselves being of earlier date than the upheaval. The toughness of this rock—or, as it is usually spoken of, "the blue"—necessitates the use of dynamite, and the heavy blasting is startling. On the diamond fields the hours of blasting are at mid-day

and after sunset. The firing continues for ten or fifteen minutes. It is thus described by a correspondent of the *Pall Mall Gazette:* "The warning bell has rung; Kaffirs and whites have streamed up into the searching-room; here and there at the bottom of the great hole a puff of smoke, a spark of light, pick out the fuses dotted here and there over the floor. Every fuse has its appointed lifetime. Here and there a few men in charge take a last look, and then flee to shelter. Presently, with a deafening roar after roar, begins the fusillade. Masses of ground heave with a burst of smoke, tremble, and crumble into gaps. Stones are thrown up almost to our feet. For ten minutes the great noise flaps and buffets round the chasm. Then another bell rings; the smoke clears away; and for twenty-four hours there is peace. Enough 'blue' has been loosened for the next day's work."

In consequence of careless storage there was a terrific explosion in January 1884, causing at the time the greatest consternation. In the immediate vicinity of Kimberley mine, through the accidental ignition of petroleum, twelve powder magazines, containing thirty tons of dynamite, ten tons of powder and blasting gelatine, and several hundred thousand detonators and rifle cartridges, were blown to atoms. Those who heard the report of the explosion, and saw the smoke column, which seemed as if it would bear down the town, say they will never forget either the one or the other. The smoke column, over a thousand feet high, was clearly visible thirty-five

miles away. Fortunately there was little injury to life or property; in explosives, however, £17,000 worth were blown away.

Kaffir labour is mainly employed in all the less responsible operations of mining: in drilling holes for the dynamite cartridges, in picking and breaking up the ground in the claims, and *trucking* it to the tub lowered to receive it; then in trucking it away from the depositing boxes and the margin of the mine, and tipping it on the depositing floors, where it undergoes a variety of processes before it is ready for washing. For every three truck-loads of ground daily hauled out of the mine there is, on an average, one Kaffir labourer employed, and to every five Kaffirs there is one white overseer or artisan.

The De Beer's is similar in formation to the Kimberley mine. Presenting my letter of introduction, I was very cordially received, and shown the surface workings of this famous mine. I say the surface, because I felt no great temptation to go down the shaft in a heat that seemed to me would be stifling in the case in which you descend. The descent was made by the correspondent of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, from whose letter I extract the following:—

"When my turn comes to be coffined, it happens that I have to descend alone; and a queer sensation it proves. I lean back in the slanting shaft, taking care to protrude no hand or foot; a caution, a signal, then gentle motion, and the brilliant sunshine fades away. Once or twice on

the way down my eyes are startled by a glimpse of dim-lit chambers with darkling figures mysteriously toiling, or my ears deafened by the rattle of the ponderous skip as it plunges up and down past the slower lift at headlong speed. At length (it was not many minutes really) I stood seven hundred feet beneath the ground, at the place where the skip is loaded for the ascent. There I saw a rememberable scene.

"The passages of the mine converge upon a sort of oblong bell mouth, tapering funnel-wise to discharge into the skip below. The jaws of this are four trucks wide, four trucks going to a load. Here stand four Herculean shapes, and as the stream of full trucks from the various tramways reaches them, these four seize each a truck, force it against the top of the hole, and all together with a shout upset the weighty convoy. Instantly they drag back the empty trucks, to be pushed away each by its own Kaffir for refilling in the dark and sloppy labyrinths. A sign, meanwhile, has throbbed to the engine-room above, and also before it has touched the bottom the skip with its six tons on board is on its upward race again. The dusky giants—strong, cheery, docile, sweltering naked or half naked at their pauseless task—the cries, the shifting flare and gloom, the whole strange scene of struggle in the bowels of the solid earth, made for me a *tableau vivant* of Virgil's famous picture of Vulcan, and his monstrous ministers singing and swinging hammers in the mountain's heart.

"At the surface the precious 'blue' is run in trucks by an endless rope to the drying grounds, which are some miles away, and some square miles in extent. Each truck-load—sixteen cubic feet, or about a ton of 'blue'—conceals on an average a carat and a quarter of diamond, ranging in value from 3*s.* 6*d.* to £20 a carat. On the 'grounds' the 'blue' is softened by the sun and air, broken with picks, and then conveyed back to begin the process of reduction, which magically transmutes each ton or two of dull, heavy earth into a tiny brilliant.

"First the ground goes into the washing machine—the primitive cradle on a large and perfected scale—the working of which depends on the fact that the high specific gravity of the diamond makes it behave differently from other stones under the joint action of centrifugal force and gravitation. Spun round in perforated cylinders and pans under a whirlpool of water, the bulk of the ground flows off in 'tailings' of grey mud. The residue of divers stones, of divers sorts and sizes, is then jogged about in more water in the 'pulsator'—an evolution, I think, from the primitive 'baby.' The machine is a huge frame-work of graduated sieves and runlets, which sorts the divers stones into several sizes, and after much percolation delivers each uniform lot at a separate receptacle. After the 'pulsator,' there remain a number of dry sortings and resortings on various tables by hands both black and white, all under lynx-eyed surveillance, the pretty red garnets and other valueless pebbles being swept off by

dozens with a bit of tin, the diamonds dropped into a sort of locked poor-box; until finally the coveted hoard, all scrutinized, classified, and valued, lies on the office table of the company on its way to their impregnable safes."

There are two other mines in the Kimberley district—namely, the Bultfontein, and the Du Toit's Pan—but to describe these would only be repeating what has been said about the better-known mines. All four are controlled by a powerful syndicate, in whose hands they have become most profitable undertakings. It is calculated that seven tons of diamonds, realizing forty millions sterling, have been extracted from the mines since they were opened. The largest diamond yet found in South Africa is the "Porter Rhodes," belonging to the De Beer's Company. Before cutting it weighed 428 carats; after cutting, 150. It is a pure white octahedron, worth £60,000. A large diamond, weighing 404 carats—an irregular octahedron stone, slightly spotted, of yellow colour—was found in 1885 in the Du Toit's Pan mine. A stone of some 500 carats was found in Jagersfontein, but it was very imperfect. In Bultfontein a diamond weighing a little over 150 carats was discovered; and from this mine, though the stones average a size smaller than those from the other mines, they are said to excel in colour.

The amount of labour and machinery employed at the diamond fields is of course considerable. Something like ten thousand native labourers and twelve hundred European overseers and artisans are daily at work in

and about the four mines, the average wage earned by a Kaffir being about £1 per week, and by a white man £5 a week.

One of the pleasantest hours of the day was that spent after dinner on the verandah of the hotel. There were always some amusing stories going the round, and one got a good notion of how things were in the early days of diamond digging at Kimberley. Water was so scarce then that a bucket of it cost five shillings, and a cauliflower sold for a guinea. There could have been few thieves or members of the I. D. B. fraternity (illicit diamond buyers) prowling about in those days. Every man lived in a tent, and left all he had lying about loose; and yet there were few robberies. That there were some instances of sharp practice may be inferred from the following story.

A digger used to get his kitchen stuff from Boers coming in from the country. He dealt with one particular Boer, and kept a running account with him, which he paid every few months. One day the Boer presented his bill. The digger looked over it, and remarked that it was large. The Boer said it must be right, as he had made out the items by a ready-reckoner. "Have you the book by you?" asked the digger. The Boer produced it, and the items were carefully examined; nothing, however, was found wrong. The digger closed the book, and was handing it back to its owner when the date on the cover caught his eye. Said he, "Why—bless me!—eh!—

why, this is a last year's ready-reckoner." "You don't say so?" said the Boer. "Give me my bill, and I'll alter it at once." And according to the story he did.

The old yarns of the abundance of money and the wasteful use of it in the Californian gold fields were almost excelled on the diamond fields. I was told of a man who, after money got scarce on the fields, and necessaries cheaper, bought a billiard-room and canteen. For some reason he had to take up the flooring; underneath the boards he found £100 in coin, which had been dropped on the floor, and had rolled through the cracks. As much as 7*s.* 6*d.* was paid for two brandies-and-sodas. I saw, however, very little of the senseless extravagance I used to hear so much about. I was told that successful men thought nothing of giving a guinea where they had formerly given a shilling; but this must have been before my visit a long time.

Before companies were formed a great trade used to be carried on in the buying, by small traders, of diamonds from the diggers. It was not, of course, every one who could tell a diamond in those days, and sometimes both traders and diggers were taken in. One of the diggers, who was a particularly knowing hand, thought he would "do a shot" on one of the traders. So he got a bit of spar, and cut it into the shape of a small rough diamond. Round came the trader. "Well, what luck to day?" said he cheerily. "No," replied the digger, "can't say I have —at any rate not much to speak of. You can see for

yourself." The bit of spar was produced and examined. "What do you want for it?" said the trader. "Well, to tell you the truth," said the other, "I don't want to part with it. It is a pretty stone, and I'd like my girl at home to have it." Finally, a bargain was struck, and the digger got the money. What the trader said on discovering the "take in" need not be repeated.

CHAPTER X.

DIAMOND DIGGING ON THE VAAL.

ROUGHLY speaking, the diggings on the Vaal extend along the river-banks for seventy miles. Not that as worked the diggings stretch out this distance; for between Hebron and Barkly there appear to be few workings. But it is thought that the diamondiferous deposit, to a greater or lesser extent, may be found on almost any spot within the limit stated.

The diggers shift about from spot to spot, sometimes opening up a digging only to abandon it as unremunerative. Then after several years they may perhaps return and work it with profit. The diamondiferous deposit is found embedded between boulders, and mixed with a quantity of fine red sand, and in many places with a good deal of lime. At some of the diggings this lime forms a hard crust on the surface, varying in thickness from two to twenty feet, and shafts are sunk through it before the payable ground is reached. At other diggings the workings are exceedingly shallow, consisting of only a few

inches of red sand before the bed rock is reached. The hardest work consists in excavating and lifting the heavy boulders, under which the richest gravel is generally found.

There is little doubt that the river-bed itself is rich in diamonds; but the Vaal is too well supplied with water all the year round to render prospecting of its bed an easy matter. In a time of drought eight years ago, a narrow arm of the river was diverted, and diamonds to the value of £30,000 were taken out of the bed. The Vaal has continually changed its course; and occasionally a digger is lucky enough to strike a portion of an old river-bed, silted up with lime and gravel, when his finds are pretty sure to be good.

After the excavation has been made with pick and shovel, the boulders and large stones are thrown aside, and the gravel secured is taken to a sifting machine, called a "baby." This consists of an oblong sieve, swinging by four thongs or chains from four upright poles, and inclined slightly, so that the pebbles may roll over it. At the higher or feeding end a small square sieve, about two feet square, and coarse enough for stones three-eights of an inch thick to pass through it, is fixed over the oblong sieve, which is about five feet long, and of very fine mesh.

The gravel from the claim is emptied by hand buckets on to the coarse sieve; the worker, standing behind it, swings it alternately towards and away from him, whereby

the finer stuff passes through on to the lower sieve, which again allows only the fine sand to pass through, whilst the pebbles roll off the lower end into a tub put to receive them. The coarse stones from the top sieve, as well as the fine sand which passes through the lower one, are refuse to be thrown away; but the medium-sized pebbles which have tumbled into the tub will contain the diamonds, if there are any in the ground. Any diamond, too large to have passed the first sieve, would have been noticed at once by the worker, who has it immediately under his eye, and who continually throws out the rough stones to make room for fresh ground; whilst any diamond so small as to have passed away with the fine sand is not worth the trouble of further search.

The process that follows consists in "gravitating" the contents of the tub, so as to separate all the heavier pebbles, including the diamonds, from the light soil and stones. This may be done by hand if the operator is skilful. A small round sieve of medium mesh is used for this purpose, and into it is emptied a bucketful of the pebbles from the "baby." The workman, bending over a tub of water and holding the sieve in both hands, immerses it just below the surface, and gives it a succession of sharp twists, pulsating it gently in the water, so as to let the light stuff come to the top; then, when he is satisfied that the heavier contents have been separated from the lighter stones, he deftly turns over the sieve on to a flat board termed a "sorting-table," when, if he has managed

successfully, all the heavy pebbles will appear on the surface of the mould, and any diamonds there will at once be visible.

To guard against the risk of losing any, he dissects the mould with a little sorting-knife of thin wedge-shaped iron, scraping off the top layer of pebbles first, till the bottom of the mould is reached, and the whole of it brushed off on to the ground to make room for the next sieveful. An experienced digger can tell at a glance, from the appearance of the deposit, what chance there is of finding well in it. He knows by sight the heaviest stones that occur in diamond-bearing ground, and their presence is a sure sign of diamonds being there too. This is particularly so of a curiously marked pebble that is streaked with a succession of parallel rings, from which it has received the descriptive name of "banddoom," or band round.

The specific gravity of this pebble is almost identical with that of the diamond. Beautiful agates are also found in the deposit, as well as quartz-crystals, jaspers, calcedony, but few garnets. No estimate can be formed of the average yield of diamonds, their occurrence being too uncertain. Sometimes hundreds of loads are manipulated without finding a single precious stone; then, perhaps, a rich pocket is hit upon, and a handful of diamonds are turned out. Still, with all this uncertainty, to an individual digger the gross yield of diamonds from the river remains pretty uniform throughout the year,

being at the rate of about £4,000 a month. This represents the finds of not more than three hundred and fifty diggers, of which number three hundred are European and fifty Kaffir.

Obviously diamond digging on the Vaal is not a very lucrative occupation, bringing in on an average an income of about £120 a year. The expenses that have to be paid out of this are not very heavy, and living is cheap; the life itself healthy, and certainly preferable to that of artisans in the Kimberley mines. At some spots—such as Pniel, Gong-Gong, and Hebron—there is a pleasant profusion of foliage, and the mud huts and tents of the diggers are picturesquely pitched among the trees on the hillsides overlooking the river; whilst here and there a rustic arbour with dining-table and wooden benches may be seen hidden in the leafy shade. But the majority of the diggings are break-stone kopjes, where there is nothing but the fresh air, wide view, and free life to compensate for an arduous existence. Then there is something in the fascination of the pursuit that still draws men from all quarters of the globe, so that on a single small digging there may be nearly as many nationalities as workers.

There is no diamond market at the river diggings; and, as the expense of frequent visits to Kimberley would absorb a large part of the digger's earnings, one or more of the Kimberley diamond buyers takes a weekly trip to the Vaal, making the tour of the several camps

where work at the time happens to be chiefly carried on.

The smaller diggers find in *débris* washing more profit than in mining in maiden ground. There is no excavation to be done, and the very imperfect washing and sorting of the early days has left plenty of diamonds still amongst the pebbles. Besides this advantage to the small digger, the *débris* is mostly close to the margin of the river; whilst the unworked maiden ground is, perhaps, half a mile away, and necessitates carrying water that distance, or else bringing the ground down to the banks. At Waldek's Plant a deep gully has been excavated over a mile long, varying in width and depth from twenty to seventy feet. The ground from this gully is hauled to the surface by windlass and bucket, running on an inclined wire rope similar to that originally adopted in Kimberley mine.

Whether the diamonds found in the river diggings have been formed *in situ*, or whether they were brought from a distance, is still a vexed question. The balance of evidence is in favour of the former hypothesis. A large number of the river diamonds when unearthed are found coated with oxide of iron, which, in the case of cracked stones, has penetrated inside the cracks of the diamond. Some French geologists have argued that the Drakensberg is the home of the diamonds; but in that case it is hard to conceive why none of the other rivers taking their rise in those mountains should have brought down diamonds,

and why, even if the Vaal could be supposed to have got the monopoly of them, few diamonds should be found nearer its source than Christiana, or much below its junction with the Harts at Delports.

These and other questions are likely to remain unanswered, unless Mr. Theodore Reunert, to whose interesting paper on diamonds at the Cape I acknowledge myself indebted, answers them himself.

CHAPTER XI.

ILLICIT DIAMOND BUYERS.

THE illicit traffic in diamonds, though not perhaps carried on to the same extent that it was some years ago, still continues; and this notwithstanding the stringent penal laws enacted and the elaborate searching system adopted with a view to its suppression. A special court was constituted at Kimberley, with power to inflict heavy penalties (up to fifteen years' imprisonment with hard labour) on those convicted of unlawful possession, illicit dealing, and theft. The receiver was held to be worse than the thief, and when he was caught he was punished severely. So rarely, however, was the real receiver—that is to say, the capitalist—found buying stolen diamonds, or committing any of the offences against which the Act was passed, that the mine-owners and diggers thought that it would serve their purpose better if, by searching the natives as they left the mine, they prevented sales of diamonds to the illicit buyers. Accordingly, a searching system was introduced which could not have had other than a deterrent effect.

All the hands employed in the diamond mines were liable to be searched at any time. The natives were compelled to strip in the searching house before they entered the mine; they had then to put on pocketless working suits, and in these the day's work was done. While in the mine, before they ascended, they were searched by the overseers; and at the top they were searched by officers skilful in the detection of concealed stones. This searching system appears to have been ineffectual. For what is called the "Compound System" was adopted in preference to the other by the great mining companies. Each of the companies have a large yard, enclosed partly by buildings, and the other by sheets of iron ten feet high. This is called the "compound;" and within it the native workers sleep, eat, bathe, and receive medical attendance should they be sick. They go into the compound from the mine, and during the time they contract to serve—sometimes two and sometimes three months—they are not allowed to go outside.

When not at work, the Kaffir spends all his time eating, sleeping, or playing games in the compound. "On his way to and from the mine he is strictly watched. So, too, while at work underground. Fresh from the mine he has to pass the ordeal of the searching room, where, naked as he was born, he undergoes a scrutiny of mouth, ears, nose, hair, or rather scrub, armpits—every conceivable or inconceivable lodgment for a

diamond—goes through certain gymnastic exercises, and makes way for the next." So rigorously is the search made, that it is almost impossible to conceal diamonds.

The introduction of this system was a serious blow to the illicit diamond trade; and fortunate, indeed, it is that it has been adopted. For it is believed that from one-fourth to one-fifth of the diamonds found in the mines were sold to the illicit diamond buyers who infested the diggings. In Dr. Matthew's interesting book, "Incwadi Yami," there are some curious stories of the "I. D. B.;" and from these—some of which I include in this narrative—it may be inferred that not the least of the hardships of mining was the fraud practised by the receivers of stolen diamonds.

A few years ago, in spite of the activity of the detective department, diamonds were got out of the country in large quantities. The "I. D. B.," says Dr. Matthews, were not lacking in devices. The book post conveyed many a parcel. A large hole was cut in the pages of some novel or ready-reckoner, and the space filled with diamonds, carefully packed. The parcel, being properly wrapped and posted, attracted no attention from the postal authorities.

Kaffirs were employed as runners at night; in the day white horsemen were paid to face the risks. The diamonds they carried were wrapped in lead, so they could be dropped on the grass if danger appeared in the distance, and recovered at leisure. Other smugglers,

by swallowing the precious stones, passed the detectives safely. Astonishing, indeed, was the ingenuity displayed at that time. One man, named Phillips, had the heels of his boots made hollow, and filled up with rough diamonds, sealing them down with wax. The handles of his travelling trunk were also made to come out, empty spaces behind being constructed, within which diamonds were concealed. In fact, Phillips thought himself safe enough. The detective department, however, suspecting him, and failing in all their efforts to get convicting evidence, engaged a man to play the part of a Judas. To keep up the deception and disarm suspicion this secret agent was "rushed" and searched by a well-known detective, thus creating an apparent reason for a fellow-feeling between the two. The result was Phillips' conviction.

Here is another story worth repeating. A man resided with his wife and child in a certain quarter of the camp. He was, not without reason, suspected of being one of the "I. D. B." So the detectives came to his house again and yet again, without, however, being able to put their hands on a diamond. On one occasion, when they put in an appearance, a diamond of a large size was lying in Mrs. —— reticule upon the table. When about to rise and remove it, she was ordered by the officers to remain seated, whereupon she asked permission to send for a bottle of stout, a request acceded to without demur. Hastily scribbling the words, "Send bottle stout; keep

bag till I come," she rose, and nonchalantly handed the message and reticule containing the diamond to her child, who toddled off to a neighbouring canteen, where, as the mother knew, her husband was almost certain to be found. He, realizing the danger, concealed the stone, and the detectives soon after left his quarters baffled in their search.

Some time in 1884 a person over whose head was hanging a charge—not, however, connected with the diamond ordinances—determined to reduce his household expenses by sending his wife to Europe in charge of the proceeds of certain private speculations about which he had been singularly reticent. After selling off, he took apartments for his wife and another lady at a somewhat pretentious-looking hotel at Kimberley. All had gone on as pleasantly as could be wished. The voyage home was looked forward to with pleasure, and a visit to an old friend in Hatton Garden was among the things to be done on arriving in London.

The detective department, suspecting that all was not straight, determined to make the ladies a domiciliary visit. So one afternoon, just as a nice little tiffin had been washed down with champagne, and during which a number of diamonds had been inspected on the table, a sharp rap was heard at the door, and two detectives and a female searcher entered. The landlady, who had seen the diamonds, instantly whisked up the cloth and left the room with it, so that the officers might be able to

say privately what they wanted to their startled guests. These gentlemen, having explained the object of their visit, politely introduced the female searcher, and returned to smoke a cigar on the verandah.

The lady searcher then set to work. "Now, my dears," she said, "let down your hair. I have had finer ladies than you through my fingers." After admiring the elegance of their coiffure, she then proceeded to handle their entire wardrobe; even their dainty shoes and silk stockings did not escape attention. To shorten the story, it may be said that no illicit diamonds were found, and the detectives with their expert took their departure. Forthwith the ladies rang the bell for the landlady, who promptly answered it; but, singular to say, denied the most remote knowledge of the contents of the table-cloth, declaring that when she shook it there was nothing but bread-crumbs to be seen. What could be done? The ladies dare not appeal to the police; time pressed, and their passages were taken. There was nothing for it but to leave without the diamonds.

The sequel to the story is as follows:—The husband of the landlady whose eyesight had been so defective suddenly expressed a wish to see the Transvaal—possibly to investigate the gold-bearing qualities of that state, perhaps merely for an agreeable change. So he set out, and, extending his journey, proceeded to make an amateur survey of the proposed railway route between Pretoria and Delagoa Bay over the Lebombo Mountains. From

Delagoa Bay he set sail for Rotterdam, which he reached in a much more satisfied frame of mind than his whilom lady boarders possessed on their arrival in London. Curiously enough, he called on a diamond cutter at Rotterdam, and left for cutting a valuable parcel of gems resembling that which had so mysteriously disappeared on the day the detectives visited his hotel.

The landlord, being a gay dog, thought that he might enjoy himself before returning to Africa, and visited the sights on the Continent. At Vienna he received a telegram to the effect that his diamonds had been duly cut and were awaiting his disposal. So he at once returned to Holland, received his gems, and secured the services of a well-known goldsmith for their setting, which proved, in accordance with his orders, both elaborate and costly. When all was completed, he started once more for his South African home. He was not, however, without anxiety. He knew that the Cape Government would exact from him a certain duty of 30 per cent. *ad valorem.* The thought of this haunted him continually, until one night his cabin companion heard him chuckling and talking to himself. He had evidently hit upon a plan to evade the duty.

Arrived at Cape Town, he induced a female passenger with whom he was acquainted to conceal about her person the diamonds which already had had so strange a story, and thus endeavour to evade the eyes of the revenue officials stationed at the dock entrance. The attempt

was unsuccessful; the diamonds were discovered and confiscated; and the fair contrabandista having of course in self-defence revealed the owner, he was tried for the misdemeanour, when, in addition to the loss of his jewellery, he was sentenced to pay a heavy fine, or in default of payment to suffer a term of imprisonment.

Here is another brief anecdote about a young man who may be called Silberfeldt. Under the old diamond ordinance he was trapped in the usual way; he was caught red-handed by the detectives, and sentenced to three years' hard labour, of which time nearly two years were remitted in consequence of good conduct while in gaol. The further knowledge of the inner working of the "I. D. B." craft which he had acquired in prison so increased his self-confidence, that he boasted that there was not a man clever enough in all Griqualand West to catch him a second time. Wary, however, though he was, he fell into the meshes of the law, and along with another was arrested under the section dealing with the offence of "illegal possession." Diamonds had been found on him when he and his companion were one morning pounced upon.

The two were friends who had long been on terms of the greatest intimacy, and naturally they might have been expected to stick to each other through thick and through thin. When, however, they were placed in the dock and asked to plead, Silberfeldt at once, arrant coward as he was, exclaimed,—

"Oh! your vorship, I don't vant to plead. I'm going to turn Queen's evidence."

This attempt to save himself at the expense of his pal was too much for the magistrate. The Crown, he said, was not in want of Queen's evidence. They were both committed for trial. At this, strange to say, Silberfeldt got seven years; and his pal, who so narrowly escaped betrayal, was discharged.

One more story, and I have done with the "I. D. B." One fine spring morning a certain diamond buyer, who may as well be called Gonivavitski as anything else, might have been seen marching up and down the Bultfontein road reading the daily paper, yet keeping a narrow watch on the canvas frame-house in which he conducted his business. Active, robust, cheery, though a rogue in spirit and grain, manliness appeared to beam from every line of his seemingly honest face. Just as he had finished the leading article he caught sight of one of his clients approaching in an opposite direction. Gonivavitski started nervously, as he did not desire the visit of this particular gentleman in the daylight; in other words, he only bought of "niggers" after dark. But his dusky acquaintance gave him a sly glance, as much as to say, "I fancy I've seen you before"—a quite sufficient hint that "something" was in the immediate neighbourhood; so Gonivavitski could not resist the temptation.

Taking a bird's-eye view of the situation, Gonivavitski hastily came up to the native, who, with a knowing leer,

opened his hand, revealing a magnificent pure white diamond nearly the size of a plover's egg.

"Mooi kleppe, baas!" (Fine stone, master) said the nigger.

"Ya! Kom hier sa, booi" (Yes; come this way, boy) said Gonivavitski hurriedly, fearing observation.

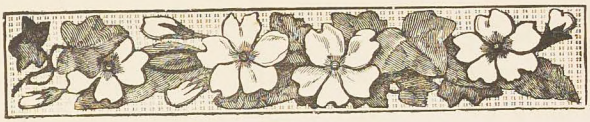
The boy did as he was told, following the white man into his office, which was close by. The door was soon shut, the stone weighed, and the bargain struck, the native starting off with the money at a round trot to join his "brothers" who were waiting in the vicinity. Then it occurred to the diamond buyer that perhaps he had been watched. Starting in pursuit of his client, he caught him, and gave him into the custody of a policeman.

"What's up now?" said the guardian of law and order.

"Why, look here, this d——d thief of a nigger wants to sell me this 'ere," was Gonivavitski's answer, given in tones of simulated indignation. "This 'ere," however, was not the forty-carat white diamond of a few minutes before (Gonivavitski was too clever for that); it was merely a piece of boart, not worth a sovereign, that he now produced.

A crowd soon gathered to watch the thief marched off to gaol, the diamond buyer following in his wake to lay the charge. Next day at the trial a little perjury more or less was immaterial. The native was sentenced to

imprisonment and lashes, whilst Mr. Gonivavitski in a few days found it necessary, for the sake of his health, to proceed to Europe, where he disposed of the diamond for a good round sum. With this addition to his former capital, he returned to the fields, and according to accounts is now a rich man.



CHAPTER XII.

COACH TO JOHANNESBURG.

On Tuesday morning, December 10th, 1889, I was up betimes, and after a hurried toilet and cup of coffee set out to see something of the Transvaal. The coach to Johannesburg in which I booked a seat might, for all I knew, have been built from a model of Buffalo Bill's famous conveyance. It was made more with a view to holding together over rough country than to afford the passengers a comfortable journey. Still, relatively considered, it was a coach for a seat in which one ought to have been duly thankful. Indeed, it was luxurious compared with the springless bullock-waggon in which it would have been necessary to make the journey if I had visited the country a little earlier. There were ten mules in harness and two horses leading. The whip was five yards long, enabling the driver to remind even the leaders that they were within reach of the lash.

The coach was preparing to start close by the "Queen's," and the guard was hurrying up passengers by performing

furiously on the bugle. At the office there was much grumbling and growling about the charge for luggage in excess of the quantity allowed. I was among the victims to the tune of £2 15*s*. You are allowed thirty pounds for the costly fare of £12, which hardly allows of a change of clothes. However, there was nothing for it but to pay and take our seats. Eleven of us were squeezed inside, some friends of mine gave me a parting shake of the hand, and with the whip cracking and bugle sounding we entered upon the three days' journey.

As we drove into the open veldt the morning air was most exhilarating, and had there been a little more room in the coach we should have all enjoyed the drive. Fortunately, I had the middle of the back seat, with a good rest behind. But in front the passenger's back was like a wall, and for a time my knees were wedged in it.

Gradually, however, we shook ourselves down, and became more comfortable. After outspanning once the coach drew up at the first station for breakfast. "Fair-view" was the name of the hotel, and an inviting-looking establishment it was, built in the open. Keen though we were for the morning meal, the myriads of flies in the breakfast-room almost appalled us. They literally swarmed, forming large black moving patches on the tablecloth, and even on the food. And while legions were busy on the table, as many again tried to settle on our hands and faces. Some old hands suggested that we should breakfast with our heads in pocket-handkerchiefs; and so we

did, being then able to enjoy our porridge and so on, with the indifferent fare of chops and bacon which followed.

We start forward again after our breakfast "with the flies," and as a soother apply ourselves to that sweet solace "tobacco" in its varied forms, according to the individual taste. Cigarettes, cigars, and pipes were quickly alight; and for an hour or so—indeed, till next outspanning—felt fairly comfortable. Then commenced that feeling of restraint combined with tediousness, which had to be overcome and succeeded by a sort of resigned hopelessness and resignation to your fate of jolt, bump, or shake, according to the special piece of track over which we were travelling. At the outspanning stations out for a few minutes to loaf around, as the sun was now gaining such power that we felt a little shelter was most grateful. The day wore on, and by two o'clock we were at the Vaal River, up to which the best part of our journey has been through the Orange Free State, but afterwards in the Transvaal, the Vaal River being the boundary line between the two republics. At the inn close by lunch or tiffin was announced, and anything for a change (even for the horses) was most welcome. I forget the name of the inn, but not the lunch, which was, I am sorry to say, unsatisfactory. The chief part was the payment—half-a-crown, with an extra eighteenpence for a whisky-and-soda, the total being rather stiff for a meal not worth a quarter of the money.

"All aboard!" in stentorian tones shouts our conductor,

and again we mount the well-known steps, and tortuously wind our persons into our respective seats. The crossing of the Vaal River is by means of a floating bridge, the same being of sufficient length to take our coach and its twelve gallant steeds. On again we travel, never slackening speed, as the horses (or occasionally mules) are made to do their utmost during their span, which is from one and a half to two hours.

The intense heat of the afternoon causes a general sleepy feeling to pervade the coach, and nodding, nay napping, becomes prevalent, some regular old stagers even going the length of "a thorough sleep." As my position was that of being sandwiched between two, I had perforce to recline on my neighbour if I wished to obtain the slightest rest; it was not a success, for at the next outspan I felt literally "all to pieces," and my backbone broken. "Fine for the liver," my friends have remarked since I returned. Doubtless it was; but I should much like these well-wishers to try for one day only this sovereign remedy.

About six o'clock we arrived at the town of Christiana; a very straggling village we should call it, with an outwardly good-looking hotel; but, as this was where we were to dine, its apparently fair outside was quite a deception. Shown into an extremely dirty bedroom to wash our hands, we found neither water, towel, nor soap. Not in the gentlest tones we called for that "boy" (the native servant being always addressed in this way) whose

duty it was to look after these details. "Follow him, or he won't come back," shouted an old traveller. Consequently "this boy" was shadowed in his search for all we required. Seated at the table, the rest was a shout and scramble, and eat what you could get.

It was, I intended saying, the worst dinner I ever had; but, to put it mildly, amongst the most unsatisfactory repasts of which I ever partook. And, on rising therefrom, instead of feeling calm, comfortable, and at peace with all mankind, one felt tetchy and irritable. The only remedy was to light a cigar, and stroll around until our steeds were harnessed, which happily was not long. Our comparison of notes of that experience was not complimentary to our late host.

Seated cosily in the back corner of the coach was a genial old German, who benignly smiled upon us from among the fumes of his Boer tobacco. He had brought his basket of provisions along with him, and was, of course, provided with all those delicacies of sausage, sauerkraut, etc., which go so far to add to the happiness of our neighbours of the "Fatherland."

We are now at about the best part of the day. The sun having set, and the air being cool, we rolled along more happily, looking forward after our day's really hard work to some few hours' rest.

At last, about eleven o'clock, we arrive at Bloemhof, at which we are to "sleep." Of all the hostelries in South Africa surely this is the least inviting. But there was no

help for it. One fellow, dead tired, threw himself, clad as he was, full length on the bed, and three minutes after was "fast as a church." Myself, with the other occupant of the room, proceeded more leisurely. After a slight inspection we decided on not venturing within the bed-clothes; so, with very slight alterations in our toilet, we lay down on our respective couches—in my case to turn over and over without sleeping, as I was thoroughly overtired, and almost too done up to sleep. Bloemhof is a village of a handful of burnt-brick houses, and here and there one with a plastered front. Some seventeen years ago this was the scene of the Bloemhof arbitration, perhaps better known as the Keate award. There was a definition of boundaries, and the village became geographically important.

Four o'clock next morning, and the bugle sounds. After a cup of "filthy" coffee we curl ourselves up in our lairs in the coach, to endeavour ere the day has well begun to make up for the shortcomings as to sleep during the previous four or five hours. It seems a long time before we have breakfast, which is two outspan stations from Bloemhof, by which time we are really started on our second day's ride. This is a repetition of the day before, with if anything more uninviting food.

At tiffin I went into the hotel, sat down, and was served with something in the shape of a stew; it looked so nasty I had fairly to beat a retreat, a biscuit, washed down with a little weak whisky-and-water, being more to my

taste. Only occasionally could we obtain a glass of milk; this, laced with spirits, formed a change, and very sustaining too. In the course of the afternoon one of the stopping-places particularly took my attention, from the beggarly condition of the whole shanty. It was the residence of a Boer farmer, his wife, and two children; and consisted of one room (a hovel), the walls of mud and floor of cow-dung, the only light being that which came in at the door and from a nine-inch square window; the entire furniture consisted of one old chair and one table, the remainder being turned-up boxes, with a shake-down in the corner for the family. The wife was engaged in manufacturing some coffee, which was presently served to us with condensed milk instead of the real article. It was a very hot afternoon, and I remarked that it would indeed have been a luxury had we been able to have a basin of cold water, soap, and towel, more refreshing a hundred times than all the wretched Dutch coffee, and more profitable too.

On we travel over the interminable veldt, until between seven and eight o'clock in the evening we arrive at Klerksdorp; this is, I believe, even a younger town than Johannesburg, and quite a wonder in point of the rapidity with which it has sprung up. It has an enormous hotel, with a large dining-hall, capable of seating, I daresay, two hundred persons. A large straggling town, chiefly composed of corrugated iron buildings, after the usual pattern of mining towns.

After a "wash and brush up" we found our way to the dining-room, where the regular attenders were just finishing their meal; so we rather came in for the fag end. Although our anticipations of a better meal were good, yet the reality was disappointing—I suppose in consequence of being late. A quiet cigar on the hotel stoep, and listening to conversation on local topics, completes our second day from Kimberley. Then to a more comfortable couch, and first-rate night's rest.

Near Klerksdorp is the cave of Wonderfontein, the discovery of which some years ago suggested, it is thought, the underground river described by Mr. Rider Haggard in the adventures of Allan Quatermain. I had not the good fortune to see the wonderful cave, as we arrived too late and departed too early to admit of our visiting it; but from the description given by Dr. Matthews one may infer that it is a remarkable subterranean hall.

"On our arrival at the place," says Dr. Matthews, "pointed out to us by the guide, which was surrounded by trees, we scrambled down a few feet into something like a pit, twenty feet deep and about thirty yards in diameter, having at one corner a little hole, barely large enough to admit a man.

"Through this we groped one at a time. We did not advance far before the pitchy darkness caused us to stop and light the candles and lamps with which each visitor had been provided. Then continuing our descent for twenty minutes at least, as it were into the bowels of the

earth, we were suddenly ushered into a hall of dazzling whiteness, a scene of startling, fairy-like beauty presenting itself which words fail me to describe. Passing on a few yards, we found ourselves in a large amphitheatre at least one hundred yards across, with a dome sixty feet in height arching above. From this hung in profusion groups of glittering stalactites, like giant icicles, some being as much as thirty feet in length, others shorter, and all the colour of driven snow, which, combined with the stalagmites growing as if out of the floor, and in some cases meeting, produced an effect which was simply superb.

"In one corner the stalactites extended nearly to the ground in circular pillars, and to the eye of fancy seemed like the carved confessionals in some Continental cathedral. A little farther—still allowing fancy scope—there could be seen the pipes of a magnificent organ extending to the dome; while, seemingly to prove that all was real, our guide ran his fingers over these vibrating pipes, bringing out a succession of tones both musical and clear. I must not forget to mention that the echo which reverberated through this majestic hall reminded me most vividly of the Taj Mahal at Agra, and of the curious acoustic properties of that white marble mausoleum."

Friday morning we were summoned by four o'clock. The usual cup of coffee; but on getting to the coach found additional passengers. In room of one leaving we had a gentleman who I found out afterwards was one of the originators of the Oceana Company, and a most

intelligent and agreeable companion. The other passenger was a lady with her infant. Poor wee mite! it seemed very poorly; and, like all selfish men, we looked askance at this latest addition to our already crowded conveyance. This feeling did not, however, prevent one of our number immediately giving up his seat (the most comfortable one, being that with its back to the horses), nor from our doing all we could to make her as comfortable as circumstances would permit.

Off we start through the silent streets of Klerksdorp, and soon are shaken down again into our places, and away over the veldt. We get to Potchefstroom about seven o'clock. This is one of the oldest towns in the Transvaal, prettily situated, and with plenty of trees and other vegetation, the houses more substantial, and the whole aspect of the place more pleasant and inviting than anything we have yet seen since leaving the coast. With these fair surroundings and greater signs of civilization we learned that we should here stop for breakfast.

At a really good hotel (for the Transvaal) we had a comfortable meal, the only want being butter, of which the supply had entirely run out; so preserves (all English make) had to do duty instead. In conversation we learned that Potchefstroom was strongly fortified during the Boer war of 1881, and a stubborn resistance was here made. The court-house was one of the places held by the British troops. Here are still the marks of the Boers' bullets; and the hole in the door is pointed out through

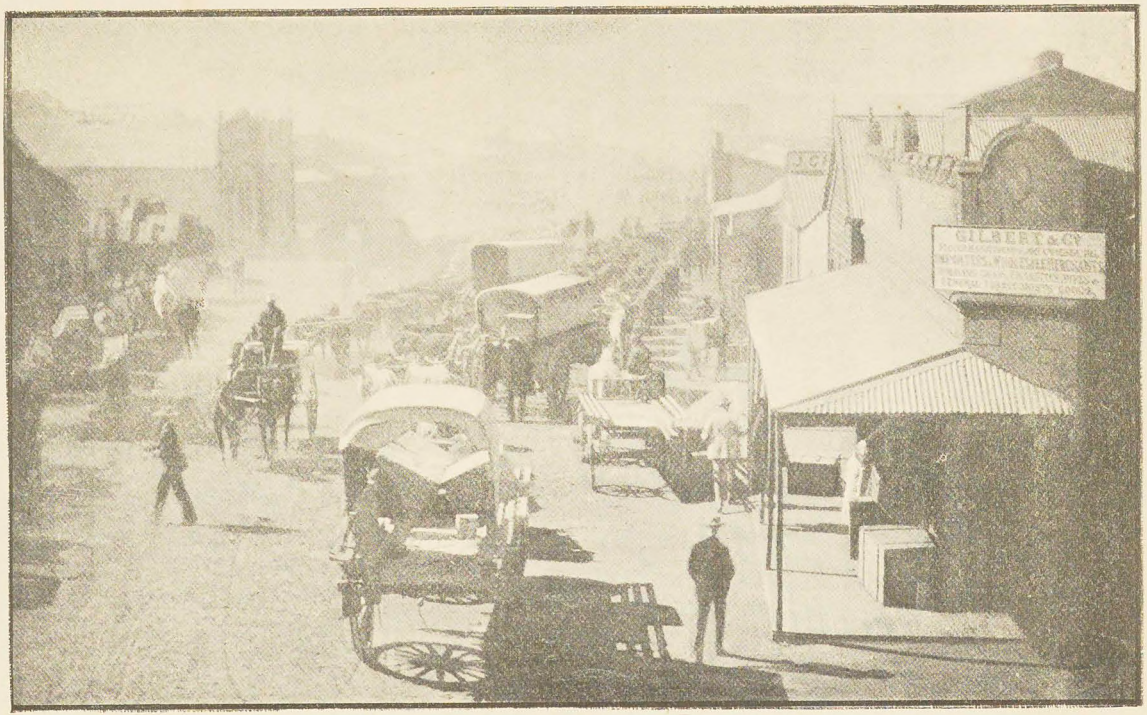
which Captain Falls, on the first day of the attack, fell.

It may be of interest to give Dr. Matthews' account of the affair:—After Captain Falls' death, Colonel Clark took command, and with the thirty-five men he had with him defended the building for three days, until the Boers fired the roof, and he was forced to surrender on December 20th. The Boers, elated to a degree, outraged every rule of war, sentenced the men who had capitulated to hard labour, and forced them to work in the trenches which they (the Boers) were digging in front of the fort where some of our troops had taken shelter, and which they were defending. There, exposed to shot and shell, several lost their lives—killed by the bullets of their comrades, who knew them not. I next visited the fort itself, which had been the scene of so many painful events. In a space but twenty-five yards square were crammed during the siege nearly three hundred souls, of whom about a hundred could only bear arms. These men, women, and children remained cooped up from the date above mentioned until they surrendered March 20th, evacuating the fort on the 23rd. In the rear of the fort a stone enclosure was pointed out to me, containing the graves of those who died during the four months' siege.

With regret we leave this fair and smiling town, as, although we are travelling by coach, time is kept, and (accidents excepted) we are due in Johannesburg at seven,

and usually arrive almost to the minute. During this day's journey we passed a most unusual sight. A span (sixteen) of oxen had been struck by lightning and instantly killed. They lay as they fell, one on the other; and a sickening sight it was. The vultures had not touched them, nor Kaffirs removed their skin and horns, as the mode of death prevented either touching them. The smell from their sweltering carcases was something too horrible to think of. One of our number gave us timely notice, "Handkerchiefs out," but not at all too soon.

At a good pace our team completed the remaining distance; and at seven o'clock, with aching bones and much soreness of flesh, we reached our destination. A friend had secured a room for me at the Grand National Hotel, and there I remained during my stay at Johannesburg.



STREET SCENE, JOHANNESBURG (S.A.R.).

CHAPTER XIII.

JOHANNESBURG.

As I have already said, it was evening when we arrived at Johannesburg. And for a new town, named only in 1886, there was a surprising manifestation of old-world liveliness. It almost seemed as though a handful of miners had bought a town ready made, with streets and squares and public buildings complete, and that some great carrying company had brought it over sea and land, and delivered it in a habitable form, with the electric light laid on, the beds made, and the corks drawn for dinner.

Certainly the growth of Johannesburg has been, without exaggeration, startling. The oldest inhabitant is a man, one may say, of yesterday. And he tells me that where the town now is, a year or two ago there were only a few canvas huts. There was no use looking in any gazetteer for an account of the town; it was not even a geographical expression. One day—it was the 20th September, 1886—Captain Von Brandis, the first commissioner, drove to the camp. A hole was dug for a flagstaff, and the flag of

the Transvaal Government was run up. Then the commissioner proclaimed the territory a gold field, and the township which he proceeded to mark off he named Johannesburg.

In six months' time the development had been so rapid that Mr. E. P. Mathers wrote: "The days of paying three shillings for a bed among broken bottles and glasses on the earth floor of a canteen have passed away. There will soon, perhaps, be more hotels than may find profitable business, while three clubs and two exchanges are in course of construction." What, however, struck me as even more remarkable were the large amounts realized at the early sales of building sites. Within four months of the date of proclamation the sites sold realized £22,000. "Small pieces of ground giving only a dozen feet frontage realized as many pounds per month for ground rent alone. One lady, the owner of a tiny corner canteen, the site of which originally cost less than £20, and the building on it say £150, was offered £1,500 in cash for the property, and a rental of £100 per month for eighteen months, three months' rent to be paid in advance. She declined the offer. She was also proffered a rental of £15 a month for a piece of ground eighteen by twenty, adjoining the whisky-bottle property, and this also she refused."

It was believed that the town would be the largest and most important in South Africa, and to it thousands flocked. It is planned into regular broad streets, and into blocks of erven fifty by hundred feet, street corner "stands"

being only fifty by fifty. There are three large squares; the main one, the market square, being the most spacious in South Africa. The town generally is being built of wood and iron, but in some parts there are substantial dwellings of brick and stone.

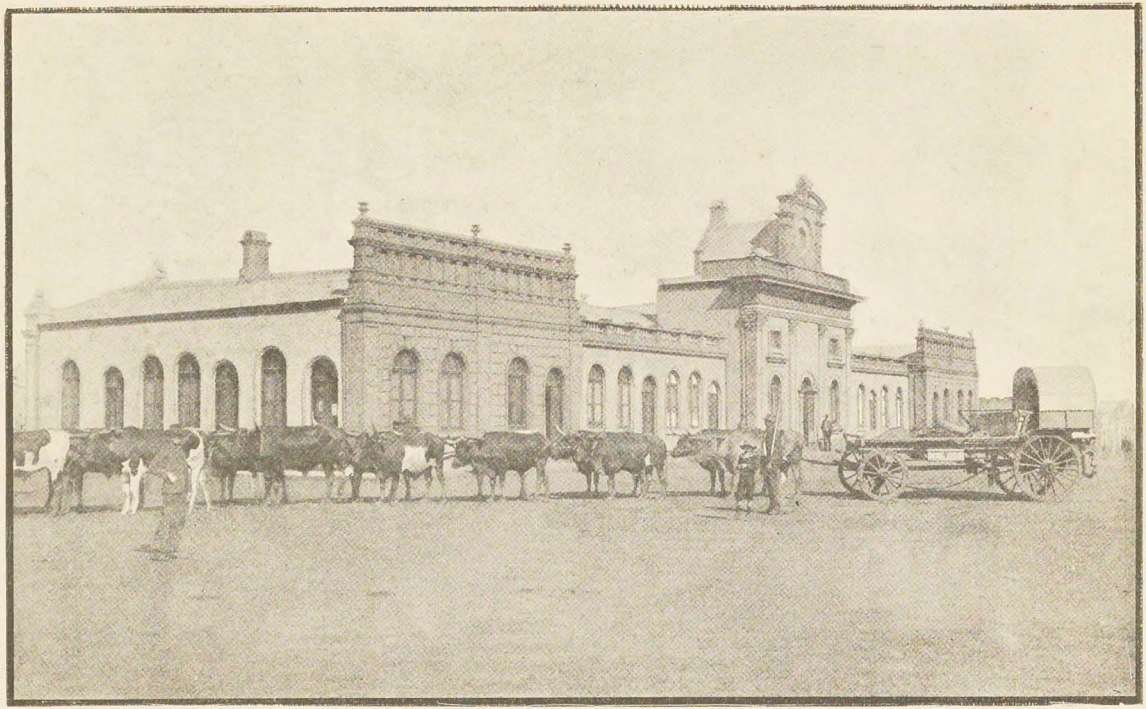
The hotel—the Grand National—at which I had taken up my quarters seemed to me an enormous building for the size of the town; but I recollect now that two hundred dined in the hotel daily, and though they were not all staying there a large number were; and when the "boom" comes, for which they are waiting, the hotel people will doubtless need all the accommodation they have.

Mr. E. E. Kennedy, who was, I think, in Johannesburg a few months before me, says that "on arriving in the town we had joined some bachelor friends in 'diggings' on Booysen's estate. 'Booysen's?' said a ship acquaintance we met in the town. 'Oh yes, a very nice place to live at; but you get your throat cut now and then as you go home of a night.' It was a playful way of conveying the information, but we were somewhat alarmed at the suggested contingency, so we inquired of one of our chums if there was any ground for it. 'Oh yes,' said he; 'such things don't occur often, but some time ago there were three murders in one night. By jove! what a mending of locks there was the next day.' 'Was the murderer ever discovered?' 'No. It was supposed to have been the work of a Kaffir; but there's no telling.'"

Mr. Kennedy adds, in his interesting little book "Waiting for the Boom," that he was never molested in any way when out at night. And this being practically my own experience during the months I stayed at Johannesburg, I am inclined to think that what fears may have been entertained were more imaginary than real.

The hotel was scarcely one's ideal of a comfortable English inn; a caravansary would perhaps be a better name for it. It was big and rough, and gathered under its roof there seemed to be people from all the four quarters of the earth. The bedroom I occupied was shared by a companionable young fellow named Desanges, and it belonged to a set built exactly like soldiers' barracks, with a gallery all round, doors leading into it, and court-yard in the centre. Outside our door, about six every morning, two boot-cleaning "boys" squat to work. And it affords one no little amusement to hear their childish laugh, and the jokes they seem to be cracking in the vernacular. One comes most carefully into our room, grins, looks round, picks up the boots, turns round and grins again, repeating the performance as though it were the greatest fun imaginable.

As the mining centre of the Witwatersrandt gold fields (White Waters' Range), Johannesburg has drawn large numbers to it. There is a large stationary and a still larger floating population. What the actual figures are I am unable to say. Indeed, it would be mere guess work for any one to say at what the population now stands. An



PUBLIC BUILDINGS, JOHANNESBURG (S.A.R.).

estimate is given in the "Statesman's Year Book," which may not perhaps be far out. According to that, there are twenty thousand gold-diggers, and ten thousand people engaged in trade. The floating population is put down at a hundred thousand, and no doubt the number engaged in agriculture is very large. That there has been an enormous development goes for the saying; nearly a million in gold was sent from the mines last year, and these, so far, have been only imperfectly worked.

It is pointed out as a noteworthy feature of the town that many of the poorer classes of Boers are settling in it, and turning their attention to miscellaneous occupations. They are to be seen not only in the brick-yards, but on the scaffolding and roofs of the new houses, carrying water and building material, and eking out a living by labour of other kinds.

In the market square you meet with crowds of white, yellow, and black men; pedlars both Jew and Christian, organ-grinders, and other familiar figures. In the morning there are sales of all descriptions of produce, and the populace turn out largely to these before breakfast. Stalls bearing fruit and garden produce are to be seen on every hand. And to the Saturday market Boers in carts, on horseback, and on foot come, and it is said they often prefer paying more at the market stand for the articles they require than they could buy them for at the stores.

Nor are the townsfolk cut off from amusement. They have a theatre; and one evening during my stay I

witnessed a performance of *London Assurance*, by Lionel Brough's dramatic company. The death of Mr. Laurie Grey, a leading member of the company, caused a painful sensation. Being five thousand feet above the sea, and about three hundred miles from the coast, you would hardly have expected to see a circus in Johannesburg. Yet one was in the town, and doing good business. I went to see the performance with a friend. They were acting *Cinderella*, and made a special effort to charm and surprise the audience. All the lights were suddenly extinguished. The ring was transformed into a ball-room, and very pretty it looked when the electric light was turned on. Of music—perhaps I should say of a sort—there was no stint in the town. Where there was no band there would be a piano, and you marvelled how there could possibly be any tune left in the instrument, after having been bumped about in a waggon for weeks together from the coast to the gold fields. At an earlier and rougher stage there were canteen smoking concerts, at which the banjo and the bones were the delight of the assembled miners; but though these have not quite passed away, the new music-halls with imported "talent" and the billiard-rooms are the more popular entertainments.

One discovery I made may not be without some interest. I daresay it has puzzled you, as it has me, to tell where all the old clothes, cast off at home, go to. Well, there is a great market for old clothes at Johannesburg. Heaps have been sent there, and if ever the long-waited-for

"boom" is signalled, I should say that heaps would be sent again. Indeed, I see no reason why there should not be a "boom" in cast-off garments. The natives, who are the principal buyers, are very fond of old uniforms and great-coats; and a "corner" in these articles might possibly set the ball rolling.

Speaking of great-coats reminds me of the heavy rainfall I witnessed. Every one wore top-boots and waterproofs; the town was deluged, the water falling in torrents, and rushing over the place in small rivers. But after it was over we were all thankful, the air having been cleared and freshened, and the water required for use improved. The rain-water was a godsend, for the town's supply was greatly complained of. It was so discoloured that a lady diver at the circus refused to perform in the diving tank. The water is drawn from wells sunk only a few feet, and the colour in the bath suggested weak coffee. This has now, I believe, been remedied, the joint-stock company established to supply Johannesburg having erected efficient filtering reservoirs; and so far as I am able to judge the public feeling is decidedly in favour of the supply being in the company's hands rather than in those of the Government. There is plenty of water in the neighbourhood, and now that there is good pumping machinery to get it to a sufficiently high level, there should be no uncertainty as to the supply.

This is of course assuming that guarantees have been taken that the reservoirs and distribution will be main-

tained adequately and properly safeguarded. The Sanitary Board have, no doubt, their hands full; but why not increase their staff, and arm themselves with stronger powers? When visitors complain that the sanitation is not all that it might be, and especially that slops are thrown out on to the veldt, they are not likely to remain long in the town. And this is all the more to be deplored in that the climate of Johannesburg—at the bracing altitude of five thousand feet—is one of the finest in the world.

I found a difficulty in realizing that it was December. Even at night one was glad to open doors and windows. I daresay some of my friends at home pictured me sitting over a roasting fire, snugly enjoying a winter's evening tale. According to the almanack it was the shortest day. But really it was midsummer, and more than once I enjoyed a swim in a wooden swimming bath of clear, cold water. The air, however, was not always dry; sometimes it was saturated with moisture and trying, and the wet on the rainy days made the ground so heavy that ox-waggons have had to be dug out of the holes in which the wheels had sunk. Another trouble was the dust. It blows about in thick clouds; you sink ankle deep in it in the streets, and in your hair and your clothes you carry about with you a considerable sample. But where is there a place on the face of the earth without drawbacks?

CHAPTER XIV.

GOLD.

NEED I say that the talk of the town was of gold? At the hotel, in the streets, everywhere you went, the subject uppermost was gold. I was not interested pecuniarily in any of the mines. I was not an engineer or a prospector, and I had not visited Johannesburg to dig or to speculate; but I heard so much of gold and gold-mining, and the fortunes that had been made and also lost in the two years preceding my visit, that naturally enough I began to inquire how it had all been brought about. I found no difficulty in getting people to talk; the difficulty was rather in checking the flow of talk, so full were those one met with facts and figures relative to the gold fields.

I was told that in 1854 gold had been found in the Witwatersrandt. This, I should perhaps explain, is the name given to a large tract of country in the Transvaal, stretching from Pretoria to Potchefstroom. It is composed of open ranges of hills of slight elevations, seamed

here and there with watercourses. It has been described as not unlike a rolling prairie, and the veldt which covers the surface makes travelling in the region extremely rough. Witwatersrandt (shortened to Rand) means the "White Waters' Range;" and as it is likely to become as prominent in our language as that blessed word Mesopotamia, I make no excuse for giving here what I am told is its equivalent.

Of the first discovery little is known; indeed, it was not till 1884, or thirty years after, that gold in this connection was mentioned again. Then the firm of Struben Brothers, finding gold on one of their farms, erected a five-stamp battery. The results from this led to further prospecting, and the discovery of the Confidence Reef. This showed assays of nine hundred and thirteen ounces of gold to the ton; and at a public exhibition, held at Pretoria in July 1885, Mr. Struben asserted that the Rand fields would prove the largest in South Africa. It was found, however, that the Confidence Reef could only be traced a short distance, and also that the mining gave but poor results.

By no means discouraged the prospectors continued their labours, and at length the news reached Pretoria "that rich gold had been found in the neighbourhood of Gatsrand, that the bodies of gold-bearing ore were regular and ran for miles, and that they would carry a large population and lead to immense industry." Colonel Ferreira inspected the neighbourhood of Gatsrand

for the Transvaal Government, and reported favourably. The line of reef was traced satisfactorily; and in the following October the Government decided to proclaim nine farms on the Rand as a public gold field. The farmers, however, were not shuffled aside without consideration. Reserved to them was the right to take up for themselves a *pro rata* area according to the size of their farms. The lands thus reserved with certain rights of water were secured to the farmers, and in all instances they retained on these private lands their homesteads. The rest of the ground was then thrown open at the rate of one pound per claim per month, one-half of which went to the farmers who had owned the land, and one-half to the Government. There was a rush of diggers and speculators; traders and tradesmen followed, people from all parts began to shoal to the Rand, and in a twinkling the foundations of the town of Johannesburg were laid.

According to the author of "Golden South Africa," Johannesburg owes its creation to Hope and Outside Capital. And this, I should say, is pretty nearly the truth. Certainly an enormous amount of English money has been sunk in the town and the gold fields of the district. And whatever "boom" promoters may say to the contrary there has been very little return so far for the stockholders' money. There is, of course, no telling what may happen in the future; but it must be admitted that the gold fields—well, for the moment

—are disappointing; that is, though containing gold-bearing ore, the cost of extracting the gold is more than the value of the metal. I am speaking of the Rand gold fields generally. It may be that in some instances gold is being got out at a profit; but I should say that this is extremely unlikely, having regard to the high cost at which gold-mining machinery is put down at Johannesburg, and to the high rates paid for unskilled labour in the mines.

The truth is that the mine owners and managers have been extravagantly sanguine. And, on the other hand, investors have been astonishingly hopeful. It was believed that a great gold-bearing region had been discovered. Nor has this been altogether falsified; but sufficient stress was not in the first instance laid on the fact that this region was nearly three hundred miles beyond a railway terminus, and from eight hundred to a thousand miles from shipping ports. What was placed before the public was the result of crushings. And good care was taken that these crushings should be of a sensational character.

The assays also were, I am told, prepared for public consumption. "Too frequently," says Mr. Mathers, "I fear assays have proved a delusion and a snare. I have heard of men who, more familiar with the shape of a pewter pot than a crucible, have done some very expert swindling in the assay line of business. A little office, a few bottles of coloured liquid exposed above a heavy

window blind—that is the stock-in-trade. A cigar and a snooze on a couch fill up the time supposed to be spent on the assay; but who during a company floating boom would not willingly pay ten guineas for a certificate that a 5 dwt. property sampled 2 oz. 7 dwt. 13·47833 grs.?"

Then stories such as the following were put into circulation. "A digger, it was said, had struck a small leader which was far away from any habitation. He followed the lead up, and at a depth of thirty feet came on a rotten reef three to six feet wide, full of gold. He worked by himself, and every few months he would cover up the shaft, bury his tools, and take a trip to Europe or round the world. When he got through his money he came back again and worked a few more months, and then made for another tour. He was away on his third tour when his shaft was discovered, and the secret was out."

Other and still more wonderful stories were told, and I am afraid were believed; and when to the figures of the sensational crushings and the imaginary assays reports wildly exaggerated were added, investors overlooked the cost of carriage, and rushed to put their money into the gold fields. Then began the great South African gamble. Companies multiplied, and every device to which the unscrupulous could resort to inflate prices was adopted. I saw a list the other day of Witwatersrandt mining companies, and, roughly totalling the capital, found that it was between fourteen and fifteen millions sterling.

To Johannesburg brokers, speculators, storekeepers, and so forth shoaled to make their fortunes. It was not, it is true, so easy to get there. There was the Cape passage to pay for. Then the railway journey of six hundred and forty-seven miles to Kimberley, and a coach drive from Kimberley to Johannesburg of two hundred and eighty-five miles. Somehow a crowd of gold hunters got there, and each in his own particular way set to work. Syndicates were formed, and new schemes launched by the score. After a morning's drive to the mines the new-comers would declare there was a brilliant future for Johannesburg. Of gold-mining probably not nine out of ten knew anything; but they could pick up the jargon of the mines, and reel off for hours their views. A sharp, pushing, striving lot they were on the whole, and their activity and often recklessness created great bustle and excitement.

Prices rose rapidly, the banks readily advanced on scrip, and everybody seemed to be making money. But not in mining. You would find the mine owners and the managers on the exchange. No doubt somebody was left in charge of the properties; but it was expected by the investing shareholders whose money was sunk in plant and mining rights that directors and responsible officials would be attending to their duties instead of spending the best part of the day in share-mongering.

The Stock Exchange was then in the old building. It was there that the last "boom" was worked, and where

the most exciting scenes of 1888-89 were witnessed. Mr. E. E. Kennedy, who was a member, thus describes the Johannesburg Exchange: "To a man fresh from the London Exchange, where an individual is chaffed for a whole day if he wears a very loud neck-tie, a gaudy pair of trousers, or something very special in waistcoat, and where it would simply be seeking the destruction of the offensive article to walk in with any hat on your head but the time-honoured and universally respected chimney-pot, the costumes of the Johannesburg Exchange were a rude shock. In the matter of hats they wore every kind of headgear *except* the chimney-pot. There were helmets, deer stalkers, cricket caps, and even a Tam-o'-shanter. The weather was cold in the early morning, so there were many ulsters, some of remarkable design and colour; there were men in riding breeches and top boots, who carried a hunting crop, and looked as unlike stockbrokers as anything we could imagine.

"We found afterwards that among the members were men who had been storekeepers, canteen-keepers, lawyers, policemen, farmers, ostrich feather dealers, clerks, bootmakers, one or two defaulting brokers from London, and there were some who were said to have been dealers in old clothes, and a good many of them looked as if that was their natural calling. There were men from Kimberley too, some of whom were known to have taken the degree of I.D.B., which in South Africa is recognized as a past-master's degree in the art of roguery."

There were six or seven hundred members of the exchange, and while the market was rising money was flying about in all directions, and the flow of champagne scarcely ceased from morning till midnight. Nothing was easier than to get a pocketful of money. The banks would discount your promissory notes smiling, or advance almost up to the hilt on scrip. It seemed as though they were ready to accommodate anybody with an over-draft; and need it be said that those who were operating in the share-market availed themselves of the kindness of the bankers to a very large extent. This was all very well while the belief lasted that the crushing at the mines would run to an ounce or two of gold per ton. The question was, How long would it last? It was expected that the output of gold—about thirty-five thousand ounces—would rise higher and higher, till it figured for the month at one hundred thousand ounces, which was certainly a comforting expectation. For then there would be another boom, and prices would go up Heaven knows how high. The over-drafters would sell out at the top of course, and settle with the banks. They would then go home chucking money about like lords, and on their arrival buy landed estates. There was much extravagance in the air just then, as the over-drafters and their backers soon found. The output, so far from rising, actually showed signs of falling, and this notwithstanding a spurt made to show up well for the Paris Exhibition. The banks took note of this, and they began to ask for more security; then

the run down in the market began. It had at last dawned on the people that the mines were not paying their way, and that they never would until the cost of carriage to and from the coast was reduced, and extravagance and incompetence in the working were replaced by skill and economy.

The shrewder men had foreseen the collapse, and unloaded their holdings, much to their own advantage in the "boom" of 1888-89. So that those who had bought them, in the belief that another "boom" was coming, found themselves in difficulties when the banks put on the screw. And this they did in obedience to instructions from headquarters. There was great grumbling, as may be imagined. It was declared to be harsh and unnecessary, that the output from the mines would rise to five figures, and that the next Johannesburg "boom" would "astonish creation." But it was all to no purpose, and the over-drafters who could were obliged to pay up. Those who could not went to the wall.

There were some, however, in the books of the banks so heavily, that it was thought it would serve the banks better to keep their heads above water than force them to a settlement. I heard it said that one over-drafter, who, in the first instance, had begun operations without capital, owed so much when the market ran down that his bankers, rather than let him go to the wall, arranged to pay him £1,000 a year until prices recovered. Happy over-drafter! His bankers should, of course, know

better than any outsiders what his securities are likely to be worth. But one would have thought the overdraft wouldn't be much reduced by keeping the debtor in clover till the next "boom" was sprung upon the town.

CHAPTER XV.

THE GOLD FIELDS.

About the time of my arrival mining shares had depreciated from 30 to 40 per cent. Those who could locked up their scrip, and went off for a holiday. Some returned to Europe, and have been waiting ever since for the reaction. Others went up country, or arranged to spend a month or two on the coast, hoping that they would be recalled to resume active bargaining on the exchange.

I had not been underground, having, as I have said, no pecuniary interest in any of the mining properties. But an opportunity offering, I went down the shaft of the May Deep Level, a mine about nine miles from Johannesburg. It was a prospecting shaft, sunk three hundred and forty feet; and a bucket having been placed at our disposal we prepared to descend. The accommodation seemed to me risky, for the bucket was only two feet in diameter by two feet six in depth, and there were three of us going down. The manager, however, assured us

that if we only held on by the chain and thought nothing about it we should land all right. So into the bucket we stepped. With our legs inside and our bodies resting on the rim of the bucket the descent was commenced. The manager, who was with us, lighted a bunch of composite candles, and it was well he did, for the light overhead became smaller and smaller, till it entirely disappeared. A smart shower fell into the shaft, wetting and cooling us, but doing no harm, waterproofs being on our backs. Dropping through dynamite smoke from a blasting operation, we heard the chant of the "boys" mining, and the next minute or so touched bottom. Then into a pool of water the bucket splashed, and we scrambled out to survey the mine. In the dim light, with the water dripping overhead, I am afraid I was unable to follow the courteous manager's explanations. The gold reef was there no doubt, and I was quite prepared to believe there was plenty of it; but this was because we were told so by the manager. The "boys" were working stripped to their skins, with no other covering than wide-awake hats. Our survey lasted only a few minutes, and then, reseating ourselves in the bucket, we were drawn up to the top of the shaft.

I should not of course judge other people by my own experience, but it did occur to me that I was as competent to form an opinion on gold-mining as an investment as certain financial reporters were, who had seen no more of a mine than I had, but who talked as though they could

tell the contents of a mine blindfolded. There are, I should think, about a hundred different mining properties in the Witwatersrandt gold fields. To visit even a fourth of these and investigate the working of each could not be done in a flying trip; but were it possible to inspect the whole, unless you were a mining expert with cat's eyes, the chances are that, so far as you could judge yourself from what you saw, you would be no wiser at the end of the survey than you were at the beginning.

Let me not be misunderstood. I am casting no reflection on those active and enterprising spirits to whom the inspection of a score or so of mines before dinner would be child's play. They may be able to tap the secrets of a mine by simply looking in, and, if so, they are splendid reporters; but I confess that I utterly fail to see how it is possible, aware as I am that mining secrets are reserved for the directors. These, let me tell you, are as strictly withheld from visitors—in particular from newspaper visitors—as are the secrets of the stable in racing. You may be able to collect a good deal of useful opinion from mine to mine, and you may get something near the cost of output; but, as regards the value and extent of the gold-bearing ore, there may be many guesses, but no disclosures.

Having said this, I ought to add that investors are not left entirely without guidance. The other day the *Pall Mall Gazette* published an account of the Rand gold fields, the facts and figures in which were obtained from W. Y. Campbell, the Vice-President of the Chamber

of Mines. This gentleman is an authority on mining values, and the information which the correspondent of the *Pall Mall Gazette* reproduces may be regarded as trustworthy. After explaining that the gold is carried in a conglomerate called "banket," he goes on to say that this conglomerate is a sedimentary deposit that once lay sandwiched with other successive deposits flat along the floor of an inland sea or lake.

"On that floor under water, as higher areas were gradually denuded, there was laid down first a pebbly layer, then a sandy layer, then another pebbly layer, and so on—one for every line of banket reef which is found to-day along the Randt. It is, in fact, just like a coal field, only more tilted up. Then came some force from below, broke up the floor, and turned at least one great strip of it edgewise up to the surface, when of course the layers, instead of being one above another, show only as so many narrow reefs running along side by side."

These reefs are the gold-bearing stuff on the gold fields of the Witwatersrandt. And the question is asked, What is the extent of these reefs? In reply the writer says that "where the reefs were first struck it was supposed they went straight down. Great was the disgust of those who held certain of the claims along the line of out-crop to find that lower down the whole series began dipping away from the vertical. The angle of dip along the line varies considerably, but the average angle is forty-five degrees. Now by the admitted theory of 'sedimentary

deposits,' what can this mean but the turned-up strata reverting to their original flat position? This was unpleasant for the holders of narrow properties just along the line, but it is the best hope of the deep-level claims, which at once were pegged out three deep alongside, and of the Randt as a whole.

"The reefs which run along the Randt are located into four series, the most important being that known as the 'Main Reef' series. This consists pretty uniformly of seven reefs, the general average of gold per ton from which is from 12 to 15 dwts. This series as a whole is the richest of the lot. A mile south of it lies the poorest, the 'Bird Reef' series, averaging only 4 to 5 dwts.; a mile south of that again the 'Kimberley' series, thicker in body, and yielding from 8 to 10 dwts.; and last, two or three miles farther to the south, the 'Black Reef,' to which no accurate yield can yet be assigned.

"The amounts which I have given as the average of gold per ton are in each case the amounts actually being extracted by the machinery now in use—that is, only about 50 per cent. of the gold that is in the ore. With better machinery, and with the addition of chemical to mechanical processes, the companies claim that, like other companies elsewhere, they will be able to raise that 50 per cent. to 90. Certain 'concentrates' representing 2 per cent. of the ore that is crushed are now being saved by some companies from among the 'tailings' which run to waste through their machines. These concentrates are

now awaiting the treatment which is to raise the golden average by 40 per cent. Let us be very mean, and allow them only an ultimate total of 60 per cent.; let us even cut them down to the 50 per cent. that they now get; let us neglect all other series but that of the Main Reef. In length, that series has been traced from east to west for more than fifty miles. In depth, it has been proved, as far as shafts have yet been sunk—in the middle, at the far east, and at the far west—from 300 to 400 feet. The breadth of each reef, and the gold that is coming out of it per ton, I have given on the best authority. There are seven of these reefs; there are 18 cubic feet of banket to the ton; and gold is worth about 3*s*. 9*d*. a pennyweight. If you have plenty of time, and a very large slate, you can cipher out for yourself what an immense mass of the precious metal, even on the most grudging basis, lies in the Randt awaiting conquest. The gold is there—not in chunks to be had for the asking, not in richness which would repay the cost of bringing machinery in balloons; but in such enormous quantities as mankind will not readily give up the hope of winning from their rocky envelope."

Having stated that only half the gold in the ore is got out, the correspondent observes: "But the point is that even that half they cannot get out at a decent profit. According to the best idea I can form, the present cost of production is—For mining, about 15*s*.; for milling, about 11*s*. to 13*s*.; altogether about 27*s*., or adding cost

of development, shafts, etc., say 33*s.* or 35*s.* a ton. It follows that with gold at 3*s.* 9*d.* a pennyweight, it costs 9 dwts. to get out the seven or eight of the Main Reef. In other words, the largest and most regular mass of ore in the Randt cannot as a whole be worked but at a dead loss, and its certain wealth of gold is lying idle—a reserve property awaiting happier conditions. Till then those companies which have richer ground must keep the pot boiling with that; and even then the margin is often a matter of a pennyweight or two, which vanishes at the first touch of a refractory ore."

Obviously gold-mining in the Transvaal under existing conditions is unremunerative, and it is as obvious that it is likely to remain so until the high charges for carriage are lowered. "A mill which costs in England £1,000, by the time it is set up here has cost perhaps £3,000. 'Deals,' the indispensable means of propping the mine passages, cost at Durban 4½*d.* the foot; on the Randt, 1*s.* 8*d.* to 2*s.* And so on with food for men, forage for beasts, and every other thing which in the wilds of Africa must be brought from one place to another. The ton that might come by rail at £7 10*s.* costs as things are £18 10*s.* The consequence is that it takes at present £10,000 to open up and equip properly fifteen to twenty claims. These conditions are absurd. The gold industry is crushed under the ox-waggon of the Boer."

Two facts are worth noting. One is that there are in the Transvaal the foundations of a great gold industry,

and the other is that the causes which are making this industry unprofitable may be removed. And by railways. "Up on the Randt, Cambridgeshire would compare with the veldt as mountainous." So that there should be no difficulties other than money to overcome in the making of railways over the veldt. True, the Boer has so far objected. As things are he puts thousands into his pocket, earned by his ox-waggons. He thinks that his occupation would be gone were railway extensions to be made. On this account President Kruger has been opposed to railways. I say has been. But is he now?

The railway extension is all but completed to Coldstream, the border town between Natal and the Transvaal; consequently what remains to be done is the comparatively short distance to Johannesburg. There is this, however, to be borne in mind. The promoters of the Delagoa Bay scheme have priority of concession, and until their line is completed Paul Kruger cannot, according to promise, allow another railway to cross the border. Then, I believe there is an engagement that the Orange Free State railway is to be extended to the Transvaal after the completion of the Delagoa Bay scheme. So that there are two undertakings to complete before the extension from Coldstream to Johannesburg can be made. Circumstances, however, may force Paul Kruger to alter his decision, for even the Boers are beginning to understand that in their own interest railways should be made. For if concessions were refused gold-mining in the Rand would be brought

to a standstill, and Johannesburg would be deserted. There would be no freight for the ox-waggon. On the other hand, with railways running from the coast to the gold fields, prices would fall—it is believed 50 per cent.—and gold-mining as an industry could be carried on profitably.

CHAPTER XVI.

A FEW LAST WORDS ABOUT JOHANNESBURG.

THOUGH the visitors at the Grand National were rather a mixed lot, among them were some very good fellows. Dr. Jackson, a professional man of colour, and his wife, an Englishwoman, I found really nice people—agreeable, chatty, and well-informed. Dr. Jackson, let me add, is well known in England, having passed with distinction through the medical colleges; and at Cape Town he had the finest practice, so highly were his abilities thought of. There were some countrymen of my own—capital chums in a distant land—one or two of my former fellow-passengers in the *Garth Castle*, and a number of people I had never seen before, and whom, probably, I should never see again.

The breakfast was at eight; and, as you may possibly find yourself in the same quarters, I may as well tell you how we fared. Well, for breakfast there was porridge for a foundation; and let me say that it is the best thing you can begin with. I preferred the

tea to the coffee. Then there were eggs and bacon, fish, chops, and other kinds of relish, finishing up with marmalade. At one o'clock we had tiffin. It would do duty for a mid-day meal at home. Soup, small *entrées* of different kinds, steaks, chops, pudding, and so forth. The dinner was similar to tiffin, with hot roasts and fowls added. The *menu* is always a pretty good length, and if you saw it you would say that there was nothing more to desire; but the dinner on paper is one thing, and as it appears on the table is another.

I am not going to complain, but I certainly expected that the salmon would not have been fished from a tin, or the fish turned out of a sardine box. But on Christmas Day all grumbling was hushed when a plum pudding made its appearance. I don't know whether it was tinned or not. But it is due to the proprietors of the Grand National to say that we enjoyed it. Christmas pudding and strawberries and cream are not usually found together; but at Johannesburg one followed the other at the particular dinner to which I refer.

Fruit is neither good nor plentiful. I was told that the Dutch Boers were too lazy to cultivate it. Would this not afford a good opening to English market gardeners? The prices of things, in general, seemed to me high. Your washing costs five shillings per dozen, and if you remain long in the Johannesburg dust you will require a lot of washing. The dust is awful;

it gets into your mouth, nose, and ears, to say nothing of your clothes. Loaf sugar is eighteenpence a pound, and drinks are expensive. A brandy-and-soda costs one-and-six, and a "go" of whisky a shilling. What a night's hard drinking would come to I have no idea.

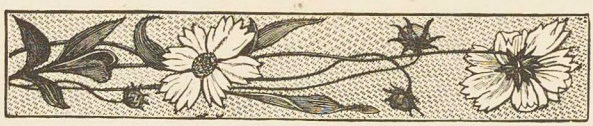
If the fall in the share market could have been prevented, or at any rate staved off for a year or two, Johannesburg would have been famous for attractive buildings. As it is, the town causes surprise. The post office and other official buildings are built of cement, which looks like stone, and handsome structures they are. There are blocks of offices, bank buildings, and large and commodious stores, and, in a word, the equipment for business purposes astonishes you. One handsome club—the Randt—is already built, with very complete appointments of the latest date. A second—the Gold Fields Club, if anything more select—is now building, and when completed will be a model of comfort and convenience. I think I may with pardonable satisfaction embody here a note which appeared in the *Transvaal Mining Argus* of January 30th, 1890 :—

"The Gold Fields Club.

"We understand the furnishing committee of the above club have decided to recommend to their London agent the acceptance of the estimate with specifications and designs recently submitted to them by Mr. John Finch, of the firm of John Finch & Co., Wholesale Cabinet-makers and Upholsterers, 20, City Road, London.

We have been favoured with a perusal of the sketches, and are extremely pleased to find Mr. Finch has caught the feeling of the architecture of the buildings, which are after the style prevalent in the reign of Queen Anne. When the furnishing is completed after the designs we have seen, we have no doubt the Gold Fields Club, for comfort, convenience, and good taste, will be second to none in South Africa, and closely approaching those in the West End of London. We compliment Mr. Finch upon the success he has already attained on his visit to our clime, a reward to the enterprise which brought him from England to extend his business, and wish him success in the towns he proposes to visit ere returning home. The many drawings that Mr. Finch executed during the short time he has been in Johannesburg are very creditable, and without doubt prove him to be a draughtsman of first-rate ability."

In an earlier part of this narrative I stated that my visit to South Africa was arranged with a view to the benefit of my health, and, at the same time, with an eye to business. Instead of sending a traveller to South Africa for orders, it seemed to me that it would be wiser to go myself. For obvious reasons I have refrained, in these pages, from going into matters of a private business character; but I think I may now say that neither from a business nor a health point of view do I regret the time spent in Africa. On the contrary, I regard it as time well spent, so much has my health been benefited, and so many are the gratifying assurances of support which I have received.

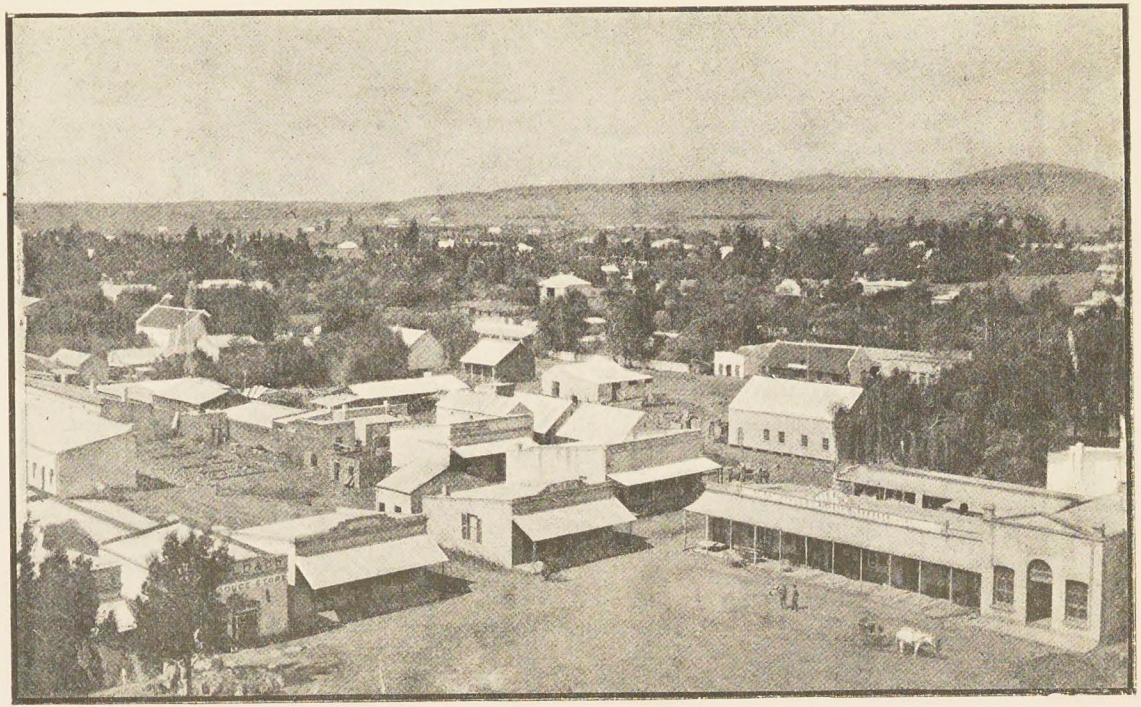


CHAPTER XVII.

PRETORIA.

THE capital of the Transvaal is a five hours' journey from Johannesburg. Conveyances of different kinds—coaches such as I have already described, carts, waggons, and the like—are frequently going and coming, so that there is no difficulty or loss of time, if you be in a hurry, in getting to Pretoria. I started by coach on February 1st a little after mid-day. There were twelve passengers inside, and a good many outside, and on the outskirts of the town a policeman with a heavily chained "nigger" got up, adding to the topheaviness of the vehicle. The prisoner was taking his last ride, as he had been condemned to death, and was on his way to Pretoria, where the sentence would be carried out.

Speaking of this reminds me of a story I heard in the coach. It was said to be one of Baines', told at a time when a prisoner was thought more troublesome inside than outside a prison. As the story goes, a prisoner whose rations were not forthcoming at the



VIEW OF PRETORIA (S.A.R.).

proper time persuaded his gaoler to let him go and dine at the hotel. On returning, however, to the prison, the gaoler refused to admit him. "If this gaol," he said, "is not good enough for you, go and find a better." I was told that in those days, when treadmills or other appliances for hard labour were wanting, the prisoners were not always unemployed, for some were seen carrying about fowls, which they had been sent out to sell by the gaolers.

After the usual rough riding in parts, we would bowl along comfortably in others, and chatting and smoking the afternoon passed pleasantly. At the half-way house we had a good lunch. Having hitherto been unsparing in my complaints about the food in the Transvaal, I think I should say a good word for the excellent meal we had on our way to Pretoria. With a cigar there was nothing much left to desire. The track, however, got rougher, and, if I may use the word, more "bouldery," shaking up our livers, and making things in the coach for the time unpleasant. Then a good drive on a level road brought us to the capital, one of the most delightful towns, I must say, which it has been my good fortune to visit.

Arriving at the Fountain Hotel about six, we enjoyed a capital dinner, and made ourselves comfortable. There was a warmth about the place I liked, and the well-to-do look indicated a tolerably prosperous state of things. The truth is the Boers have thrived by the gold-seeking and

the influx of English money. For the farms upon which gold had been found exceedingly high prices were given, and in consequence the value of property at Pretoria was greatly enhanced. Many of the Boers received for their farms sums of money they had never dreamt they would ever possess. Farms which but a few years previously had been bought for a mere song changed hands at startling figures.

I was told that owners had sold out at figures ranging away up to £100,000 and beyond ; that indeed so common were £20,000 cheques that many a Boer valued his farm at not a penny less than that sum, although not an ounce of gold may have been found on it. And when he makes a haul he feels no temptation to speculate with it. He must invest it in land. So when one farm is sold he goes in country to look for another, or invests his money in property at Pretoria and its neighbourhood.

The next morning I had a dip in a pretty bathing nook overshadowed by willows, and then a look round. The streets are all at right angles, lined in many places with large gum trees; while the houses, neat and cosy, have well-kept gardens in front. In one of the pleasantest roads is prettily ensconced the English Cathedral, a brick building, say some seventy-five or eighty feet long by thirty feet wide,—I should say the smallest cathedral in the world. In the centre of the market-square is the Dutch Reformed Church, which cost £20,000, and is an ornament to the town. Arriving too early for service,

I walked through the paddock beyond, to a grove of lovely peach and fig trees, in which also luxuriant wild flowers were growing. The fruit was not quite ripe, but there was abundance.

I tasted the prickly pear, and it deserves its name. You must carefully envelop it with a cloth or handkerchief, and cut open to get at the fruit inside; but if ever so little a prickle gets in the finger it seems to spread to both hands, and you suffer as though stung with nettles. The more you scratch the worse it spreads; and should you use the handkerchief to your face in which the pear has been wrapped you become a picture. I venture to say that you will never touch prickly pears again.

There is a good club here, but I was comfortable enough at the hotel. My bedroom overlooked a tennis lawn (brown, not green), at one end of which were large willow trees, and verandahs all round. A friend suggesting a drive, we drove in a Cape cart to a real Dutch farmhouse. The stolid-looking inmates, who severally shook us by the hand, gave us a welcome drink of milk, and left us to our own devices. Walking some distance, we saw a wonderful group of Euphorbia trees ("Wunderboom"), growing in a series of groups forming a circle, and looking at a distance like one tree. The path was through the orchard, in which peaches (not yet ripe), figs, and oranges were growing. On through fields of Indian corn higher than yourself, across a rivulet balancing oneself on a bamboo pole hardly three

inches thick, and then emerging entered a hilly and fairly wooded country. Returning, my performance on the bamboo pole must have been amateurish, for I nearly fell in. It was fearfully warm, and we were glad to get back to the farm again, where we found our Dutch friends calmly seated exactly as we had left them. Everybody had to shake hands all round again on wishing them good-bye.

The mode of carrying black babies is in the hollow of the mother's back, and it would amuse you in these parts to see the heads of the infantile niggers wobbling over the top of the blanket in which they are carried. The food the Kaffirs live on—mealy-meal porridge—isn't bad. It tastes like the farinaceous food in use at home, and is really Indian corn.

What detracts from your enjoyment here, if you be a man of business, is the slowness of the transit. At home people cannot imagine, with railways always at every turn, what it is getting about in the Transvaal. In particular in removing goods the delays seem never ending. Cases despatched from Port Elizabeth in November had not turned up here in February, having been three months on the road. No one, however, seemed surprised, and it was no use grumbling. One had just to possess one's self of patience and wait. Whether it be the climate that takes the energy out of the people, or the natural turn they have for taking things easy, I know not; but it seemed to me that time was no object to them,

and that they made it a rule not to do to-day what they could put off till to-morrow.

The delay, however, enabled me to see a good deal of the place and the surrounding country.

The House of Legislature is in the market-square, but I had no opportunity of being present at a sitting. Mr. Mathers describes it as follows : "At nine o'clock in the morning a little boy runs up a flag at the pavement corner. This is the national flag. It has, as it happens, three horizontal strips—red, white, and blue. The combination has not been unknown in Pretoria before ; this time there is a stripe down the side, the colour of this particular line being green. What signification, if any, the green stripe has alongside the English colours it is not for me to say. Weather-worn wooden rails partition off the verandah of the Parliament House into a space like a sheep pen. On the wall of this pen is fixed, at a distance from prying eyes, a large black board, and on this are tacked what were once State papers. The documents are in various stages of decomposition from long exposure, and the amount of printed matter still left of each ranges from a tiny dingy morsel fastened by a tack to some dirty torn leaves left fluttering in the wind. The subject-matter of each is hidden under the dust of ages.

"A bell rings at nine o'clock, and the fathers of the land—most of whom have been smoking a morning pipe on the verandah—saunter in to business. Listening to the

minutes is dreary work, so the fathers may be left for an hour or two. Drop in by-and-by and you will see them all seated at two green baize-covered, horse-shoe tables in a narrow apartment, sixty-five by twenty feet by fifteen feet high, the ceiling being nailed canvas, and the bare walls a clean whitewash with a blue dado.

"At one side of the room on a green carpeted daïs, and at a raised desk also covered with green baize, sits the President in his green sash of office, showing prominently on his big black coat. Above him is a little canopy, the drapery of which—the national colours—serves also as a border to surround an oil-painting representing the arms of the Republic. By the President's side sits the Chairman of the Raad, Mr. Klopper, the member for Rustenburg, who wears a toga. He is the first "commoner" in the land. At the feet of Oom Paul, seated at a little table of his own, is Commandant General Joubert, a popular and mighty man of valour, who, it is imagined, casts covetous eyes on the chair above him.

"The President taps the desk in front of him with a little hammer when he wants silence, and the whole scene when in repose—which it sometimes is—suggests a well-ordered auction sale, the President quickly asking for bids, while the company sit demurely studying what might be catalogues.

"But just now they are following the reading by the Clerk of the annual report of the Superintendent of Education. The question of the teaching of the higher

branches of music springs suddenly to the front, and that enlightened member Mr. Birkenstock gets on his feet. He proceeds to argue vigorously in favour of such tuition, and he says that what he had heard in some of the schools reminded him of the 'symphonies of Beethoven,' which he begged to remind his fellow-members he understood. But his fellow-members would have none of it, and there were sounds of dissent, which in the Transvaal Volksraad consist of guttural ejaculations and the shuffling of heavy feet on a matted floor.

"The President calls Mr. Birkenstock to order with raps on the desk from his hammer and his fist, and the monotonous reading of the educational report goes on until somebody moves and carries an adjournment of fifteen minutes for a smoke. The members get thirty shillings a day when serving their country in this way; but the esteemed wife of one of them thinks it a great shame that her good-man does not get more than the others, as he speaks more than they do. It is believed there would be no objection to voting him an allowance to speak less."

At the time of my visit a new House of Parliament was being built.

Periodically the market-square is crowded with Boer waggons, whose owners have trekked in to celebrate their Nachtmaal (Communion), of which it is their habit, in company with their wives and children, to partake four times a year.

One of the pleasant walks in the vicinity is to the Fountains along the bottom of the hills by a stream all the way. Beautiful wild flowers and ripe figs tempt one to linger. As you saunter along you come to a spring bubbling up from the sand, and here for the first time in the country I had a drink of cold, clear water; for this you had to go down on hands and knees, dipping your nose in to get it; and it was most refreshing laving one's face and hands in the cool water, though, to tell the truth, I got a nasty crick in my neck in bending down.

At the office of the Government assayer you may see some remarkable specimens of gold-bearing ore. There is banket assaying from a half to ninety-two ounces of gold to the ton. Blocks yielding silver and copper, in one case fifty-eight per cent. of copper, and five hundred ounces of silver to the ton. There are also samples of sulphate of antimony giving eight ounces of gold to the ton, and a considerable quantity of silver. There is a sample of silver lead from Bronkhorst Spruit, showing seventy-two ounces of silver to the ton, and scores of specimens of gold quartz and coal. No one can visit Mr. Dawson's laboratory without being impressed with the fact that in the Transvaal there is great mineral wealth, as yet barely touched.

In the Volksraad there used to be, and no doubt are still, some very amusing scenes. On one occasion, says Baines, the progressive party wanted to pass some

measure for the opening and improvement of the country. Their opponents, who were in a minority, resolved to "put the drag on." And this they did by bringing to the front a long-forgotten statute, that all members should sit attired in black cloth suits and white neckerchiefs. This had the immediate effect of disqualifying so many that the business of the House could not be legally conducted. An English member, however, who lived next door, slipped out and donned his Sunday best, with a collar and tie worthy of a Christy minstrel. Sending his coadjutors to his house to be rigged out from his accumulations of old black suits and white ties, they soon reappeared on the scene, and the sitting was resumed with an array that completely dismayed the anti-progressionists.

Here is another of Baines' stories, worth, I think, repeating, though in no respect relating to the Volksraad. A well-known medical man, who prided himself on his knowledge of thirteen or fourteen different languages, was interpreting into Dutch for an Englishman, when some dispute arose.

"Oh!" said he, "it is impossible to translate your barbarous idioms; try me with some piece of pure English." The witness immediately gave :—

> "She never told her love,
> But let concealment, like a worm in the bud,
> Feed on her damask cheek."

The interpreter got on very well till he came to the last line, which he rendered thus :—

"Vreet op Verdomde Wang."

"I did not say damned cheek," interposed the witness. "The word is damask."

"Oh!" said the interpreter, "'damaged;' then it must be rendered thus :—

"'Vreet op haar Verniclau Wang.'"

To say that the Court was convulsed with laughter would be superfluous.

It was after I left Pretoria that three men were brought there under arrest from Johannesburg, charged with taking part in the destruction of the Transvaal flag during President Kruger's visit to the gold fields. The charge was afterwards found untenable, and the men were discharged; but, inasmuch as they had been arrested in the dead of the night, and marched secretly to Pretoria, though it was obvious that at least one of them, an Englishman, was innocent, it may be inferred that the Fathers can be very unpleasant when they like. The pulling down of the flag was a foolish act, and those who did it did wrong; but why punish the innocent to save the trouble of an inquiry on the spot?

One of the excursions from Pretoria is to Bronkhorst Spruit, the scene of an engagement between the Boers and the British troops in the war of 1880. The drive is one of

eighty miles, a long distance to travel out of one's way; but in a light mail cart, with good horses, the ground may be got over in seven or eight hours. Driving out of Pretoria, you pass by trees and fields and rose hedges that remind you of scenes in English country life. As you bowl along, the country looks fresh and green. It undulates for miles in grassy plains, here and there diversified by ranges of hills. About halfway the outspanning on the veldt enables you to stretch your legs; the rest of the distance is completed comfortably between five and six in the afternoon.

Crossing Bronkhorst Spruit, the ground gradually rises; and on the right-hand side of the road, dotted here and there with mimosa and thorn trees, an eminence is formed, which was the point of advantage taken by the Boers in intercepting our troops *en route* from Leydenburg, and about to concentrate in Pretoria. The occurrences of that eventful day have been thus related by Dr. Matthews: "The 94th Regiment, together with camp followers, numbering 267 souls in all, forming a cavalcade a mile and a quarter in length, was slowly dragging its way to Pretoria, when, on approaching Bronkhorst Spruit, at about half-past two o'clock in the afternoon of December 20th, 1880, certain mounted Dutch scouts were seen galloping along the top of a ridge near by. These men brought a message, requesting Colonel Anstruther, who was in command, not to advance any farther pending an answer from Sir Owen Lanyon to an ultimatum which

had been sent him. This he refused, when without further ado the Boers, about five hundred strong, opened at once a murderous fire upon our men, who were totally unprepared for so sudden an attack. Down the bullets rained like hail; and our men, who lay on the ground without a particle of shelter, were picked off with deadly precision, until Colonel Anstruther, himself mortally wounded, and most of his officers *hors de combat*, seeing the day was lost, surrendered to the Boers, after a fight lasting just twenty minutes."

After inspecting the ground and the relative positions the Dutch and English occupied during this short but disastrous fight, we visited the two principal places where our fallen soldiers lie buried. The larger of these we found enclosed by a high stone wall, about eighteen yards long by twelve yards broad, and shaded by two beautiful mimosa trees. Here lay the last remains of fifty-eight non-commissioned officers and men of the 94th Regiment, and one non-commissioned officer and one private Army Service Commissariat, killed, as the tombstone erected to their memory states, in action on December 20th, 1880. In another and smaller graveyard the officers who fell are buried. Neat little crosses at the head of each grave showed the burial-places of Lieutenant-Colonel P. K. Anstruther, Captain T. McSweeney, Captain N. McLeod Nairns, Lieutenant H. A. C. Harrison, and E. T. Shaen Carter, Transport Staff.

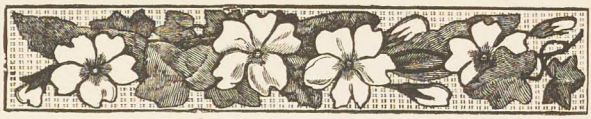
The long drive back to Pretoria is usually relieved by

resting at some of the Dutch farms, where excellent fruit and milk may be had. The farmers, though they may appear uncivil, are not so in reality. Their patience is at times greatly tried by strangers. Some take unpardonable liberties. What would English farmers say if stage passengers entered their gardens, and not only helped themselves to the fruit, but smashed trees, and made a playground of the place? There would be a scene. Well, the Dutch farmers have been caused so much annoyance by mean and vulgar strangers that it is scarcely surprising that the traveller on entering a Dutch farm notices that he is sometimes received with cold looks and scant courtesy.

Having brought my visit to a close, I left Pretoria during the most continuous rain-storm I ever witnessed. It began about six or seven a.m., and in most of the streets the water rolled down in torrents, until they seemed like rivers. Crossing them in some places was quite an impossibility, and my friends tried their best to dissuade me from starting, and some said the coach was sure to be stopped by the floods; but, my determination being unshaken, at ten o'clock I started in a full coach for Johannesburg. Conversation naturally turned on the possibility of the flooding of Six-mile Spruit, as, should this be at all passable, the rest of our journey would be assured. As we arrived within sight necks were eagerly craned out of windows, and we were gladdened by the news that it could be forded, which I had already much

doubted, seeing that on our way we had passed several waggons stuck fast in much smaller "rivulets," or spruits, as they are called here. We proved to have crossed not a minute too soon, as the coach which tried the passage next, within about an hour, was stuck fast, the male passengers having to swim to land, the coach being ultimately pulled out by a team of oxen. I had heard of numerous accidents in crossing these swollen spruits, but was never so near being in one myself as upon this occasion.

On arriving at Johannesburg I booked a seat for the first part of the return journey. There would be three days' coaching and two days in a railway carriage, after which I expected to reach Durban.



CHAPTER XVIII.

THE JOURNEY TO DURBAN.

I LEFT Johannesburg on Wednesday, February 12th, getting up at four o'clock to catch the omnibus leaving at five; it was quite dark as we crossed the market-square, to find two coaches starting, the other being for Kimberley. By lamplight our baggage was examined and excesses paid, mine being overweight to the extent of £3 10*s*. After much wrangling as to our places, we were ultimately all seated, and with a flourish of the bugle the eight horses dashed away over the hills and hollows of the streets. Our drivers guided the swaying vehicle, which bumped us about like india-rubber dolls; then came smoother tracks, and we gradually shook down into our places, and began to make acquaintance with those with whom we should be closely associated for the next few days.

My neighbour (a London solicitor, with whom I came out on board the *Garth Castle*, and who was a most pleasant and agreeable companion), three ladies, one

little boy on the way to school at Durban, and three jolly young fellows comprised, with myself, the "coach load."

I found the coach several degrees more comfortable than the coaches I travelled in from Kimberley and to Bloemfontein; but that is not saying much. It was a sort of brake, the passengers sitting along the sides and facing each other. It was very strongly built with massive wheels, and the springs were packed to lessen the force of the bumping. The luggage and mail-bags are loaded on shelves running on either side to preserve the balance. The driver sits on the front seat in the middle, the (very long) whip-holder on the right, who points out the path the driver shall take, and is also "boss of the show."

Presently the sun rose, the air becoming more balmy, and one's spirits improved, while conversation became general. The time wore on until seven o'clock, when the horses were outspanned, and breakfast was announced at the wayside inn. The repast was not inviting, the choice of viands being curried mutton, and steak with bacon. The latter I chose; but the steak was tough as leather, and the bacon rancid and hard. A cup of tea washed it down; but the flies were numerous, and we were all glad to start again. The waiter at this hostelry was a small coolie boy of about ten, very soiled as to his clothing and general appearance.

We reached the town of Heidelburg about nine o'clock;

rather a nice place, with trees and gardens all about, and a very good clean-looking hotel, where we should have breakfasted with far greater comfort. After receiving the mails we again started on our way. At one of the outspanning stations we espied a nice orchard; going into the Dutch farmhouse, we procured some fresh milk and a pailful of ripe peaches, which were delicious, and beguiled the tedium of travelling, which was further lightened by occasional songs and yarns from one or other of the passengers.

About one o'clock we changed horses (now increased to ten, as the roads were getting more hilly), at a pretty farmhouse surrounded by a nice garden. Here we really enjoyed a good tiffin, consisting of a roast wild turkey (called phow), with vegetables, followed by a most capital pudding—a sort of light boiled currant pudding with sauce; this repast, washed down by a bottle of German lager beer, was a very satisfactory one. From this until nine o'clock we had nothing, except a cup of coffee, until we arrived at Standerton, having travelled some ninety-five miles. We got to this hostelry, called the "Blue Peter," thoroughly tired out and almost famished. After some delay our host showed us to our rooms for a wash and brush-up, which having done we adjourned to look for our dinner. A suggestion that we had better lock up our rooms, as the coach passengers coming in presently might be inclined to appropriate them, led to some discussion, seeing that our apartment

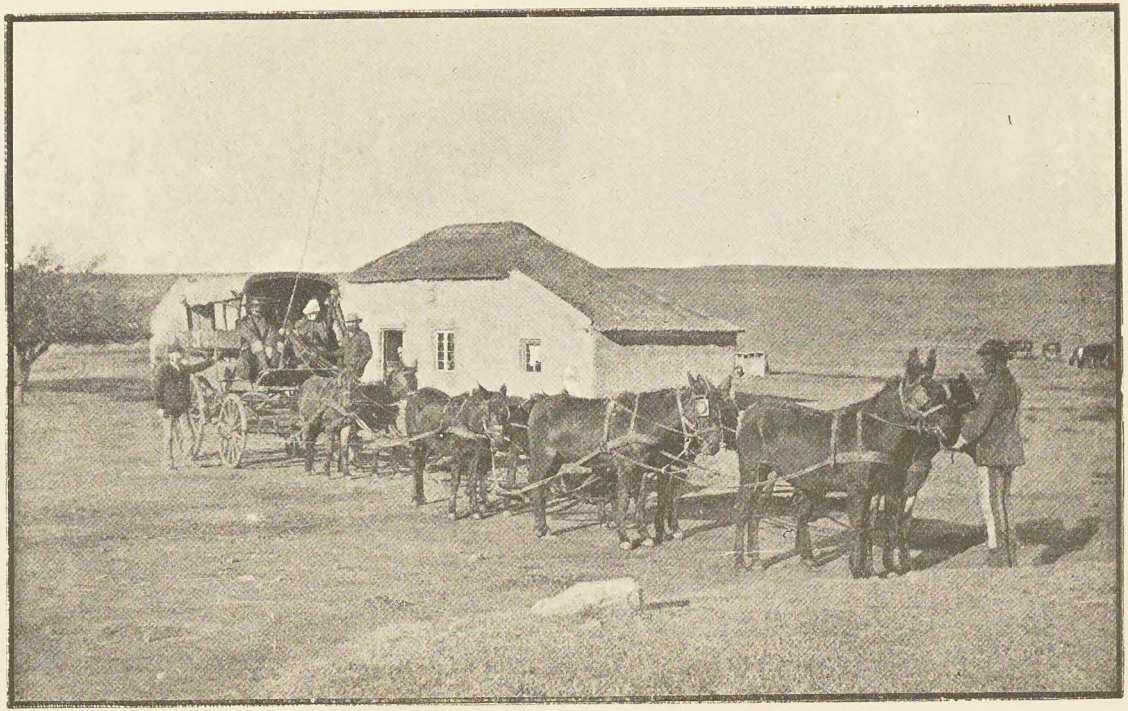
was for three sleepers, and one had already gone to roost; we determined not to lose our chance, and speedily locked up the room and its occupant. Although tired, our party was very cheerful and jolly. On the soup appearing and being served, every one called out, expressing great disappointment, as it proved to be a weak, watery, and greasy arrangement, with beans, called "bean soup." I never have tasted this before, and don't wish to again. Now for the *pièce de résistance*—roast mutton—also tough, hard, stringy, and leathery; we were still unsuccessful in appeasing our appetites, the cheese and butter being equally bad. Calling for a "B. and S.," myself and friend simultaneously drank, and looking round on the company with such wry faces, as the stuff tasted more like diluted paraffin and water, the whole party burst into a loud and hearty laugh. Alas! the "Blue Peter" of Standerton was a mistake, as we had been previously told by friends travelling, and have heard many complaints since. We "roasted" the landlord and manager consumedly, one asking was there a landrost (magistrate) in the town. "Yes," said he. "Then I'm sure the butcher who was responsible for killing that very aged sheep ought to be taken before him to-morrow morning and have six months." "Have you a laundress?" the landlord was asked. "Oh yes." "Then why don't you have the linen washed?"—the napery on beds and table being of the most soiled appearance. We then appeased our feelings by a calm

smoke and turned in, to sleep soundly until awakened by the bugle about four o'clock to start once more.

There had been considerable rain in the night, and the driver reported Vaal River to be impassable for some time, at which news we all imprecated, not loudly, but deeply, insisting on his going on. After some persuasion he agreed to send a man on horseback to see whether a passage could be found, and eagerly we watched his return. Yes, it could be forded. So off with our ten horses we galloped. It was a ticklish job getting across, but safely on the other side we laughed at our difficulties. Through very heavy roads till we drew up at Vietpoort for breakfast, which was very passable, and much enjoyed after our privations of the previous night.

We were now getting towards the borders of the Transvaal, and consequently the country changed from the undulating veldt to more hilly and mountainous regions. We stopped about noon to exchange passengers to and from Barberton, and then downhill to Coldstream, after which we were in the Colony of Natal. High on the right hand stood Majuba Hill, noted for the disastrous rout of British troops by the Boers in the war of 1881. Here was pointed out the slope which the Boers ascended, and on the other side the steep down which our regiments retreated, losing heavily under the unerring rifle-shooting of the Dutchmen. The question on all hands was, How did it occur? Well, it was one of those unaccounted-for mistakes which no one can answer, especially as the

leader, Sir G. Pomeroy Colley, was killed during the engagement. At Lang's Nek, over which we passed, there was the scene of another engagement, unfortunately disastrous to the British troops. On a rising hill close by is a little graveyard, with an obelisk to mark the last resting-place of Colonel Dean and the graves of others killed here. On this, the roughest bit of road I have experienced, we literally had to hold on tight to prevent our being shaken to pieces. How the post-waggons stand the awful bumps is a marvel to me. But they are specially strongly built for the purpose, and come through all right—of course, occasionally with an upset. Now you can understand how furniture and glass get so smashed in transit up-country ; being conveyed in long springless waggons, which sometimes go crash over a hole in the road of two feet or two feet six inches deep. We met thousands of ox-waggons going towards Johannesburg, laden with machinery and cases of furniture, wine, spirits, also a vast quantity of timber. About three o'clock we lunched at a pretty little hotel, just under Prospect Mountain, and within sight of Majuba, jogging on again till we reached the Ingogo River. Here we procured some fruit, consisting of pineapples, peaches, and grapes, most welcome and refreshing. Fording the river we went up a steep hill, the scene of another fight, which was also a losing one to the British colours. On the top are two enclosures, containing the graves of officers and soldiers who perished. Although particularly



A POST WAGON. MODE OF TRAVELLING FROM THE TRANSVAAL TO NATAL.

interesting, this day's ride was depressing, witnessing, as we did, three scenes of disaster to our brave troops, who invariably render such a different account of themselves. Nothing more of note this day until we arrived at Newcastle about seven o'clock, a very prettily situated town in the hollow, and with nice gardens and trees about.

Dinner was served, and proved exceedingly good, the waiters being small coolie boys, from seven to twelve years of age, dressed in clean white jackets ; notwithstanding their youth, they waited most dexterously. After a rest on the verandah and a cigar, I turned into bed thankfully.

On this the third day of our trip we were up by five, and started by six o'clock. Previous to starting, our driver stated he could not take all the luggage, having additional passengers, but promised that it should come on by post-cart carrying mails, and be at Biggarsburg before the train started. Very unwillingly I parted company with my three packages; but as others were in the same predicament I felt somewhat comforted. Just outside of Newcastle was pointed out to me a small farmhouse where Mr. Rider Haggard resided some years. We breakfasted at a wayside inn called "Ben Lomond." Very poor viands; the everlasting scraggy chop and curried mutton, washed down by third-rate coffee or tea ; Swiss milk instead of the real thing. Although with most abundant pasturage without cost, very rarely indeed do people here keep cows, being too lazy and indolent to look

after them. At one of the outspanning stations I saw a very clean-looking and bright baby in the arms of a Kaffir girl. Being naturally fond of children I made signs to the child, and ultimately took it for a minute or two, at which it was much delighted ; but when I had to give it up it objected strongly, and made quite a noise when replaced in the arms of its dusky little nurse.

By twelve o'clock we came in sight of Biggarsburg, the end of our coach ride ; and before we did so a number of ox-waggons proclaimed the fact that we were approaching some busy centre. It was a welcome sight, and with further signs of civilization in the shape of a railway to Natal. This same railway is in progress all the way to Coldstream, on the border of the Transvaal ; no farther at present, as Paul Kruger (the President) is not in favour of railways, and the only concession is one to come from Delagoa Bay.*

Arrived at Biggarsburg, I anxiously awaited the arrival of the post-cart, which on unloading I found had brought two of my packages ; the other, a small box containing my papers, writing case, and catalogues, was missing, the absence of which would cause me much trouble and inconvenience, and was most annoying. I went to the two drivers, who had no answer except that it should be sent by next conveyance. I then sought the agent, who was profuse in his apologies, but assured me it would be all right. This was but cold comfort, as I

See page 116.

know the happy-go-lucky ways of South Africa. I wired back to Newcastle, which seemed all I could do. This incident rather upset me; my lunch, consequently, was not a success, especially as we had to hurry to catch the train starting at two o'clock.

I secured a compartment with four other fellow-passengers from the coach, and in a few minutes after we left the station, glad enough to have entered upon the last stage of the journey. The country through which the train passed was at first mountainous, and the ridges seemed richly clothed with vegetation. Then on a lower level the evidence of cultivation presents itself. Flowing water and luxuriant foliage were an agreeable change from the everlasting veldt of the Transvaal, and as the train wound round the slopes new beauties of landscape came in sight. We crossed the Tugela River several times, catching a view of some lovely spots of country. The recent rains had filled the river, and it was flowing strongly and swiftly along; and for hours, indeed until dark, we watched the changing scene.

Then when we could see no longer we had the carriage arranged as sleeping apartments—one each side, with mattress, pillow, sheets, and blankets. Supper followed between seven and eight. Then a weed and a chat, and we turned in for the night, the train continuing its journey eastward. We all slept soundly and well on board the train till sunrise, and as we looked out the

carriage window it seemed as though we had passed into another region. The wild mountain ranges were far behind, and we had passed into a habitable country. The signs of tillage were everywhere; fruit trees and vegetables and hundreds of wild plants caught the eye as the train moved swiftly on. Here and there nestled neatly balconied houses; gardens and pretty plantations came in sight; and in and out a perfect maze of tropical plants the train wound, till at last we beheld again the sea.

Before reaching the station the windings and turnings of the train had been so perplexing that the geography of the place puzzled me. I knew that I had arrived at the Royal Hotel, Durban; but to have picked out the course on the map would have been a feat I should not have attempted.

CHAPTER XIX.

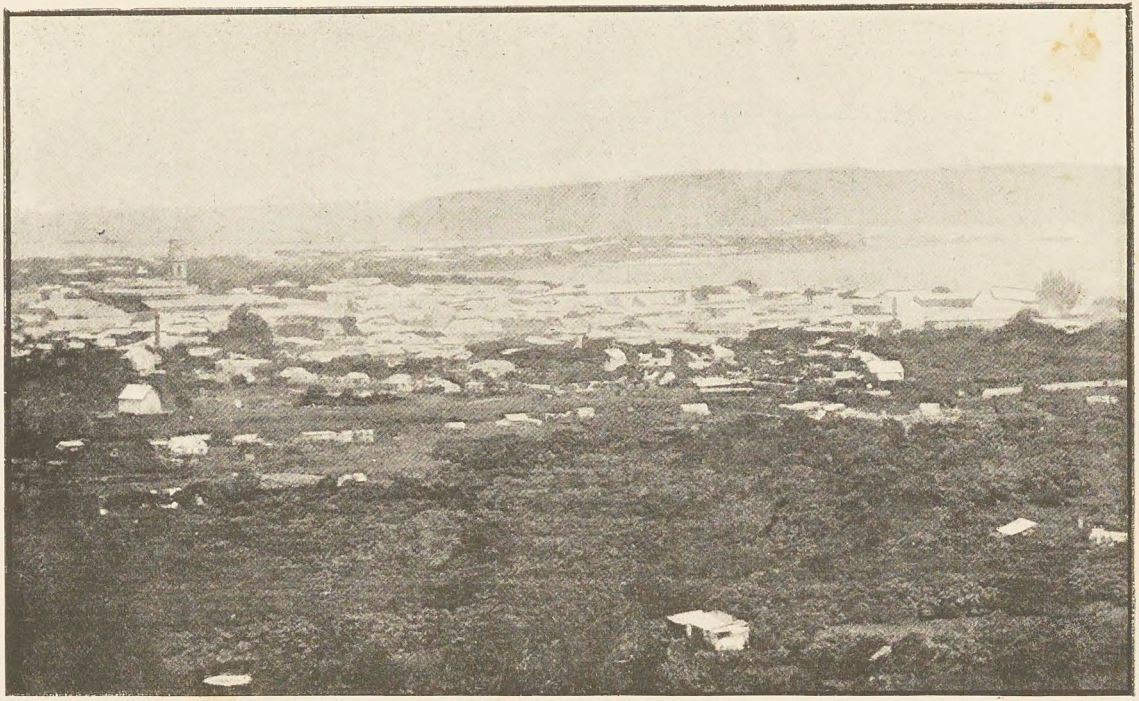
DURBAN, NATAL.

DURBAN, as everybody knows, is not the capital of Natal, the seat of government being Maritzburg; but, arriving here first, I may as well say something about it before going farther. I found myself in very comfortable quarters at the Royal. My bedroom is pleasantly placed in a cool courtyard at the back, and one is tempted to lounge in easy willow chairs rather than encounter the heat outside. One is reminded of an Indian hotel by the appearance of the servants. They are Hindoos, dressed in white shirting, with yellow silk waistband, and large pugaree wound round their heads. The chief butler, who received us on entering, salaamed with great gravity, and handed us over to his subordinates.

That there should be so many Hindoos in Natal surprised me; but it appears that many of them have been introduced by the Government, as they are willing to enter into contracts to serve continuously, which the native black, Zulu, or common Kaffir, will not. Both

the Zulus and Kaffirs object to engagements for any length of time, and in consequence the waiters at the hotels and clubs and those in domestic service are mostly Hindoos.

One peculiarity of the Colony, I may mention at the outset, is that every town takes its name from some person associated in some way with the development of the Colony. Durban, for instance, takes its name from Sir Benjamin D'Urban, a former governor; and Maritzburg, or rather Pietermaritzburg, owes its compound name to two Boer leaders—namely, Pieter Retief, and Gerrit Maritz. Surrounding the town of Durban are hills called the Berea, from which the Natalians get a fine view of their really charming town. In the early morning or at sun-down the scene leaves an impression, delightful and abiding, of calm and beauty. The Berea is the residential part of Durban; and on the heights are well-built verandahed villas and cottages, with pretty gardens and ample shade. There the Natalian enjoys his morning or evening pipe. As he sits smoking and reading, maybe, "he is in the midst of a scene of holy and serene peace, which is interrupted only by the occasional chatter of monkeys, as they leap from tree to tree in little armies, enjoying their matutinal or nocturnal gambols, as the case may be." The breeze blows cool from the sea, and even in the hotter months nothing like oppressiveness is felt. Those who live there in the winter months say the weather is lovely.



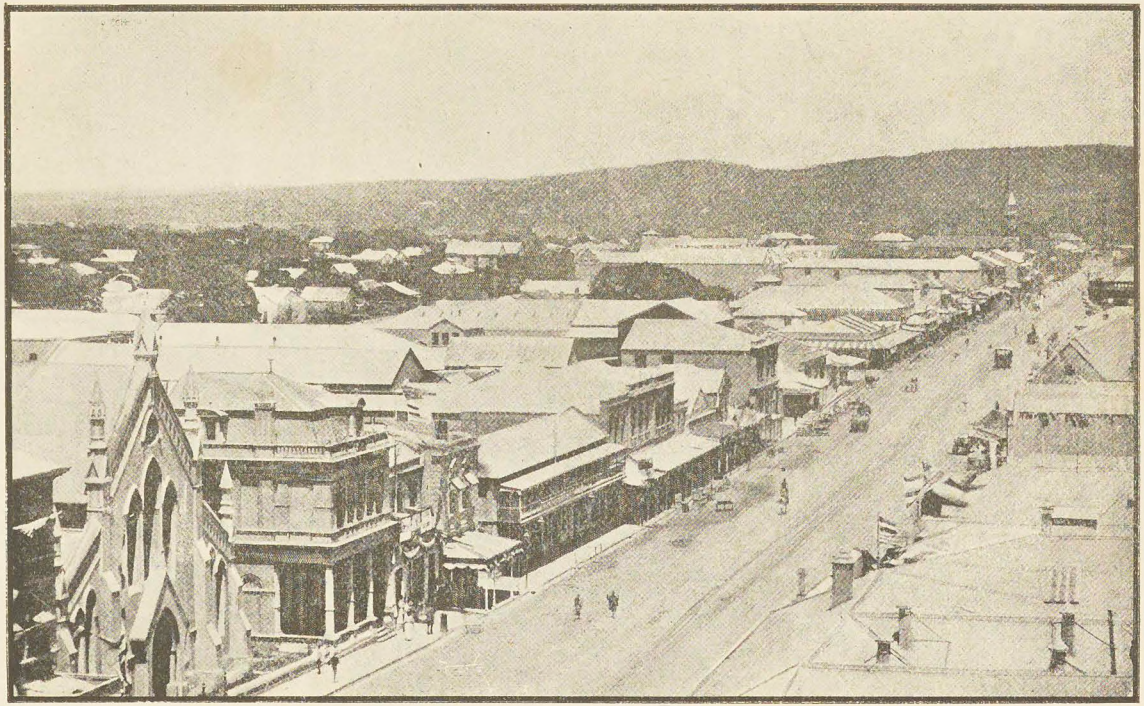
VIEW OF DURBAN, FROM THE BEREA.

I had a delightful walk on Sunday morning on the headland called the "Bluff." This, a long wooded range, juts into the sea, and trends away into the distance. On the extremity stands the lighthouse. The bay is really beautiful. Near the head-waters is a group of tiny islands, where the coolies catch fish, and where also picnic parties spend time agreeably. Flowing into the bay from the west and north-west are the rivers Umbelo, Umhlatazan, and Manzie-manyam. Farther north are the Congella flats and mangrove thickets, in which the sea-fowl find shelter; and on the southern edge of the bay is the town, presenting in a picturesque plain many attractive features.

A comparison between what Durban was thirty years ago and what it was the other day was drawn by the *Natal Mercantile Advertiser* on the occasion of the laying of the foundation stone of the new town-hall. Thirty years ago there was no drainage, and waggons were outspanned and cattle kraaled in the thoroughfares. The place was swampy, and the water from the wells undrinkable. "Horses," says the writer, "were kept, but there were no traps, and merchants, like their ancestors, went to the city with saddle-bags and samples, and brought back gold fastened round their waists in leather belts, the journey each way usually occupying two days. It is difficult to believe that all this primitive and undeveloped life, these evidences of roughing it in the truest and most unkind sense, could in a

concrete form have constituted Durban twenty-nine years ago.

"When we call to mind the grandly lengthened Smith Street and West Street, and the flourishing Pine Terrace and Commercial Road, with the numerous cross streets and roads, many of which are properly hardened, and in which paving is proceeding briskly, and the public gardens in place of the sandy market-square, and the fully planned public parks; when we think of the continuous rows of extensive warehouses, of stores, and of houses which line these streets, of the fact that the population of Durban of all sorts is now nearly fifteen thousand, of the seven churches and twelve chapels within the borough, of the splendid Theatre Royal, of the railway facilities, of the harbour works and improvements, and that the number of ships visiting this port during the past year was as nearly as possible four hundred, the value of the imports in the same period being £2,213,538, while the exports were worth £731,809; when we recollect—not an unimportant factor when considering the prosperity of the borough—that the average receipts on Saturdays alone of the collective canteens and hotels are £250, that the valuation of freehold property in the borough is £1,883,822 or close upon £2,000,000, and that the receipts of the corporation during the last municipal year were £53,697, we shall probably form a tolerably correct conception of the increased and increasing importance of Durban."



WEST STREET, DURBAN.

The town-hall—the foundation stone of which was at that time laid—has since been built, and it is a stately building, which with pardonable pride the good folks of Durban show you. I should perhaps say that Durban may be regarded as in three parts. The Point and Addington are one; then there is the business quarter; and the residential part on the Berean heights. The streets are laid out at right angles; and the principal thoroughfare, West Street, is broad and well built, paved, and lighted. On the shipping side the wharves are solid, broad, and laid with rails, and there are all the appliances required in an extensive trade.

The fruit is both good and abundant, the pine-apples in particular being plentiful and cheap, and one is tempted in the thirst-creating heat to indulge somewhat freely in this delicious fruit. The heat was very great. What it was in the sun I don't know, but it was 90° in the shade. I was glad to rig myself out in a suit of white duck to go about in, and this I bought uncommonly cheap. Mosquitoes? Yes; but in getting into bed I took care that not even the most artful should get admittance within the mosquito net, and they didn't trouble me much during the day.

The hospitality of the Natalians seemed unbounded. I certainly got a good share of it. My friend Mr. Street Wilson, the principal architect in Durban, lives on a delightful part of the slope; and with whom, in sauntering through his grounds or chatting in the domestic circle,

I enjoyed a pleasant hour. With some other friends I dined at the club, an extremely well-appointed establishment; and need I say that the champagne cup, prepared and iced by one skilled in the making of cups, was very welcome? Mr. Cleghorn, of the firm of Messrs. Dunn & Co., arriving from Europe before I left, added greatly to my enjoyment. We had delightful drives and pleasant evenings, and much to see and do.

What would at once strike you is the predominance of the black race over the white. Throughout the Colony this is very marked. The proportion is about fourteen to one. In Durban, however, there are more whites than blacks. I hardly know what is the proportion, but I should say that it is considerable. Nevertheless, there are many blacks, for whichever way you turn colour manifests itself. And it would amuse you to see some of the "boys"—natives of all ages—in domestic service; in particular those who take the little white children about. They take great care of and amuse them, and in this respect they are better than any English servants I have known. There is a catching cheerfulness one likes, even when kept pretty hard at work. In, for instance, moving about large things they always sing a song, and all keep time. When my big cases of furniture were moved twelve "boys" were at work; it was so very funny I stood and watched them, one leading off and the others joining in chorus. It is more a sort of chant than a song, and over and over again the same strain,

the perspiration the while streaming off them in the hot sun.

As a health resort I should say Durban surpasses most African towns; but, not being a medical authority, I had better consult a professional man and embody his opinion in these pages. Dr. Bonnar, jun., who for some years has been in practice in Durban, writes in Dr. Fuller's book the following: "During the winter months, April to September, the climate of Durban is most enjoyable, though compared with the more inland and higher localities its percentage of atmospheric moisture is considerable. This averaged 74 per cent. during the year 1886, the thermometer registering for these months about 67° Fahr., the mean maximum being 78° Fahr., and the mean minimum 37° Fahr.

"Like all districts of Natal, Durban has its dry season during the winter, when we have six months of bright, clear, sunny weather, varied by occasional downpour of rain. . . . Looking more especially at the adaptability of Durban and the Natal coast belt generally for phthisical cases, they cannot hold a first place as compared with such localities as Howick, Estcourt, or Ladysmith. The summer months are especially trying; but cases under my care have proceeded favourably, and some exceptionally so, during the winter season. Those who dread a low thermometric register may be advised to locate themselves near Durban between the months of April and September, and then they can with advantage proceed

to a more elevated and drier district. Some patients, whose condition has hurried them from the mother country, have to my knowledge been able, after a few years' residence in Durban, to return to England, and with care stand its climate comparatively well."

I cannot help thinking that both in commercial and municipal enterprises Durban is likely to be in a few years' time the foremost town in South Africa. Its progress has been immense, and it is still striding on wisely, building and planting and adding to the town's improvements.

CHAPTER XX.

PIETERMARITZBURG.

After spending ten days very agreeably at Durban, for which I am largely indebted to my good friends there, I set out with Mr. Wilson to pay a flying visit to Pietermaritzburg. This, the capital town of the Colony, may be reached by road, a distance of fifty-four miles, or by rail seventy-two. We preferred, I need hardly say, the railroad, which for some little distance runs along shore, and then turns high up-country. The ascent is to a height of 2,080 feet above sea-level, and the curves and gradients following each other seem innumerable. But there is so much delightful landscape seen from the carriage window, that what would otherwise be a tedious is really a very pleasant journey. The slopes, thick with grass, and the beautifully wooded and watered country between the ranges of hills westward, refresh the eye after resting long on the coast lands. The ground is very broken ; you see hill and dale, and towering mountain, and forests of trees, and over all varying hues of green.

From Botha's Hill station you see over the open country, and inhale a fine, genial air. Pietermaritzburg, usually called Maritzburg, lies in a basin in the distance, and ere long the red-tiled houses and the stately public buildings of the capital come within view, and in a few minutes you are at the station, wondering whether you are in a Dutch or an English town. Behind, the lands rise immediately to nearly 4,000 feet, and extending beyond are the Drakensberg Mountains, rising here and there to an altitude of 9,500 feet.

The streets of the town are generally laid out in right angles and parallel lines, and in many cases planted with shade trees. One soon gathers the impression that there is much care and comfort in the place. Everything looked clean and cheerful. "A pretty bridge takes us over a river skirted with trees, upon which we meet pedestrians in Bond Street attire, well-mounted equestrians, far more fashionably dressed than our friends at Durban, and equipages well appointed in every respect. The residents choose this road whereon to take their constitutional exercise before dinner, and here they may be seen taking such exercise in its various forms."

There are the usual institutions one would look for at the seat of government. Among these are the Victoria Club, the reading-rooms and public libraries, a swimming bath, botanic and horticultural societies, and friendly societies.

The Parliament House is a fine building, and the internal arrangements are excellent. In the courtyard

in front of the public buildings is an obelisk, erected as a memorial to the men who fell in the Langalibalele struggle. There is a hospitable club; and in Church Street, the principal thoroughfare, the overhanging verandahs to the shops present to people shopping a welcome shade.

Bishop Colenso used to preach at the cathedral, and when he did I was told the church was crowded. Those who have heard him say that "his noble and commanding presence, an attraction in itself, added greatly to the fascination of his eloquence." Of course opinions differed as to his views; but it was difficult, says one who heard him, "seeing and hearing him, to realize the opposition with which he was met, or to comprehend the presumption, I might say the snarling, that characterized the majority of his revilers." The Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and other bodies have their churches and chapels in the city; indeed, in respect of places of worship, there appears to be no deficiency.

One meets here up-country sheep farmers, sportsmen, Englishmen *en route* to the hunting fields of the Transvaal, Zululand and Zambesi merchants, an officer or so, the members of the Legislative Chamber, and various types of the globe-trotter. In his book on South Africa, Mr. J. Stanley Little presents two views of society here, which differ in some respects so widely that I have extracted them. The first is this: "The inhabitants of Maritzburg are a kindly, hospitable race, and they spare no pains to find amusement for a visitor. To-day they will

drive you out to the Umgeni Falls or the Table Mountain; to-morrow they will be your cicerone to the volunteer shooting butts. They will organize private theatricals, balls, tennis matches ; in fact, if you behave yourself, they will do anything for you. The inference is obvious. There are a great many men of good fortune ; there is also a clique of Britishers, well-born and well-bred, and who, having sowed their wild oats too freely in England, are sent here to settle down and reform."

Here is Mr. Little's other picture : " The capital has many a tale of gay and reckless adventure to tell. It is a rendezvous of broken-down spendthrifts, and of damaged reputations generally. Copious materials for three-volume novels might be gleaned there. People are pointed out to you on all hands with sad, sad histories. The finger of scorn has hunted them down, and they have come here to hide their frailties from a world they can no longer look in the face. To the man who tempers justice with mercy, who judges not that he be not judged, who bewails the fatal weaknesses of human nature, the aching regrets and hot tears of remorse shed in plenty in Maritzburg will excite at least his pity. Others, with minds better balanced perhaps, will see in all this suffering the retributive hand of Providence, and they will in nowise allow it to mitigate the feelings of contempt and loathing with which they regard the sinners and their sins. The world only hears the half of the tales of these poor mortals who have sinned against God and man. I was

very soon initiated into the details of one of these unfortunate romances. Upon the bridge before mentioned stood a gallant. Leaning affectionately upon his arm was a lady, whose face had but to be seen once to be remembered ever. They were resting against the buttresses, looking into the stream below; and as the setting sun threw its sheen upon them, I thought I had rarely seen a more happy or appropriate couple. A fellow-passenger, who knew, or kindly professed to know, the whole history of the couple, whispered half-a-dozen sentences into my ear, which at once dispelled my illusion. The canker was in those roses, and had eaten deep down. Turning from the marred picture with reflections more or less appropriate to the occasion, I became aware that we were passing what at first I took to be a mellow churchyard; but no, it was a modern cemetery."

Were I asked to add a word to this, I should say that Maritzburg has no monopoly of "sad histories," and that, so far as I was able to judge, the residents were taking an active and healthy interest in every movement worth helping forward. It is just possible that Mr. Stanley Little may have had a touch of "liver," and, if so, was not likely to look at the bright side of things. No doubt many of the people here have a good deal of time on their hands, but then there are others who find no lack of employment. Wool washing or scouring and hydraulic pressing go on here. So does leather curing.

The Pietermaritzburg tannery is, I am told, successful, colonial-grown bark (*Acacia Molissima*) being chiefly used. There are turnery works, at which furniture of a kind is produced.

Perhaps it may be useful to say what the timber-yielding plants of Natal are. The best known are yellow-wood, a species of yew (*Podocarpus elongata*); sneeze-wood, of the horse chestnut tribe (*Pteroxylon utile*); stink-wood, a laurel (*Laurus bullata*), black iron-wood, an olive (*Olea latifolia*); white iron-wood, allied to the rues (*Vepris lanceolata*); and essen-wood, the South African ash (*Eckebergia capensis*). It has been reported by a forestry commission that there are over two million acres of timber forest and thorn jungle in Natal. It is lamentable, however, to add that, owing to ignorance, these forests are becoming rapidly thinned. Young trees are destroyed both by natives and colonists. The importance of preserving existing forests, and of promoting the planting of fresh timber of economical and possibly exportable value, has forced itself on public attention. At first returns from such an enterprise are so slow that it can only be followed up as an adjunct to other farming. The Government aid by distributing plants and seeds, but there is still much to be done to assist private enterprise.

With regard to education and the provision made by Government, there can be no reasonable grumbling. There are two high schools, one at Pietermaritzburg, and

the other at Durban. These are designed to supply the highest education which may be called for at present. To meet the more general demand of the community for elementary education, there are four model primary and five primary schools distributed through the chief towns. There are two each at Pietermaritzburg and Durban, and one each at Verulam, Greytown, Ladysmith, Richmond, and Newcastle. It is probable that by this time one has been erected at Estcourt, and another at Pinetown. In addition to these there are perhaps forty or more private institutions in receipt of Government grants, and subject to Government supervision.

One or two excursions in the neighbourhood and a little distance beyond made my visit very enjoyable ; that to the falls of Umgeni was extremely interesting. By taking the train in the morning you can easily get back in the afternoon. The river near Howick has worn its way through piles of columnar basalt to an apse of rock, over which the water pours into the broad, deep pool below. There are various measurements of the height given, but I believe 330 feet to be correct. You can walk round on the high-level and see the falls from a certain distance across the chasm ; or you can climb down and up the Kaffir path, and see them from the bottom. The view from the rocks is very fine ; and, if ever the opportunity offers, see the falls from this point.

The railway continues its tortuous courses to a spot called Highlands, 132 miles from Durban. It there

reaches its highest point, just one mile above sea-level. Its most rapid curve is 1 in 300, and its steepest gradient is 1 in 30. Nor are rapid curves and steep gradients exceptional; they are continual, and often the curve and gradient are at their worst together. The gauge is 3 ft. 6 ins., and the rails steel, weighing 45 lbs. to the yard. All these curves, gradients, weights, and measures are of importance, as they most naturally govern the extent to which the Colony will be able to make use of its railway, particularly as regards its coal.

These railway facts were given by the contractor for the line to Mr. J. J. Aubertin, who saw a good deal of Natal a year or two before my visit. He was travelling through the Colony leisurely. I was not; consequently I could get little more than a glimpse of the country round. I had heard of an agricultural settlement about six miles from Maritzburg, at a place called Wilgefontein; and this settlement had, I was informed, been singularly successful.

In 1879 a farm of 5,471 acres had been bought by the Land and Immigration Board, an authority created to provide for the introduction of artisans, mechanics, domestic servants, and general labourers. After the farm had been purchased, twenty-one families entered on occupation, of whom seventeen remain. Their condition and prospects were very favourably reported upon by a commission appointed by Government. According to that report, in May 1885 there were 590

acres under cultivation, mostly in cereal crops for the Maritzburg market. 285 head of stock, besides 146 goats and pigs, were owned by the settlers. Produce to the value of £3,400 had been sold from the place, or consumed on it, during the preceding twelve months. A building had been erected for meetings and public worship. A school had been established, and had an average attendance of twenty scholars.

The progress made is the more satisfactory when it is considered that the bulk of immigrants were unfortunately not selected with a due regard to previous farming experience, only seven of the seventeen families now on the settlement having had such experience; and thus, not only time, but a good deal of the small capital with which they started, was expended in gaining a knowledge of the conditions under which their work could be carried on. After referring to other drawbacks connected with this first attempt at a settlement by Government, the commissioners state, "The determination of the settlers to succeed has largely done away with the unfavourable conditions which affected the settlement at its commencement."

There is another settlement about seventy miles from Maritzburg, at a place called Weenen, but in some respects it differs from that nearer the city. The land bought was a block of 5,000 acres, and the principal feature of the settlement is that a watercourse six and a half miles long leading from Bushman's River has been

constructed by the Board at a cost of about £1,560. From the land thus irrigated seventeen lots of fifty acres each were laid out, of which half were open for application by resident colonists of five years' standing. On the other half were located immigrant farmers. These allotments were granted on lease, with certain rights as to purchase, and were conditional upon personal occupation and cultivation, and on the possession of capital to the value of £200 in stock, implements, and cash. Valuable grazing rights were attached to each lease.

There are other settlements, but to these I need not refer, as I have said enough to show what the Government of Natal are doing in this direction. The question may perhaps be asked, What lands are now unappropriated in the Colony? There are twelve million acres in all, the larger portions of which are held by private holders. It would be difficult to answer the question from the reports to which I have access at present; but this may be said with certainty, that agricultural settlers would, if possessed of moderate capital, easily obtain possession of eligible holdings. But on this subject I need say no more now, more especially as my time at Pietermaritzburg is up. On my way to the station I was reminded of a passage in Mr. Aubertin's book.

"If you are walking," he says, "down by one of the broad streets, take care a Kaffir on horseback does not gallop over you. But the white and whitey-brown are

quite as bad in this respect. Maritzburg is full of galloping horses. If, however, you hear an unearthly scream, it is a Kaffir driving bullocks. I have been told that each of the sixteen or eighteen knows the cry that is meant for itself. They all seem quite indifferent to the agonized voice. Look at those passing now ; look at the bullocks. Mooning on they go, as if to say, 'What's all the row about?' The Kaffir's food can cost him very little, and his clothes still less. When he wears trousers, they are the cheapest in the world; for they are made of patches on patches ; not always from need, however ; sometimes from love of colour. In the country there is a cheaper sort of trousers still; and certain it is that the naked, loin-bedecked Kaffir looks the best. The dressed Kaffir almost always looks ugly, except in mere shirtings."

The return journey to Durban was unbroken by incident. Having completed my business in the Colony, I made preparations for departure.

CHAPTER XXI.

HOMEWARD BOUND.

HAVING secured a passage on the s.s. *African*, I shook hands with my Durban friends, and stepped on board the tug which, with steam up, was waiting to convey passengers over the bar. This bar is a shifting mass of sand, deposited across the entrance of the harbour between the bluff and the point of the opposite sandhills. The depth of water on the bar varies from eight to eighteen feet. Sometimes long-continued, heavy, southerly sea-winds and accompanying breakers bring in and pile up increased accumulations of sand, which are afterwards cleared away during high tides and fine weather.

Why, it may be asked, is so dangerous a bar allowed to remain? And the answer is that, if patience, skill, and money could have secured its removal, the good people of Durban would have got rid of it long ago; but it has proved a task of tremendous difficulty. They have spent immense sums in harbour works, and it is believed that when those now in progress are completed a

sufficient depth of water for the ingress and egress of large vessels will be maintained. There are two piers. The north one was designed to confine the ebb tide to the southern channel, while to intercept the sand travelling up the coast the southern pier was constructed. Already both objects seem likely to be attained, and, if so, the port will gain immensely in shipping value.

When the tug with its freight approached the bar, the sea was so rough and the vessel pitched and plunged so much that all passengers were sent below. This was so hot and stuffy that only sea-seasoned passengers could bear up. Getting alongside the steamer was a work of some risk and difficulty, and so also was the task of putting the passengers on board. Gangways and companion ladders were out of the question, so heavy was the sea in which both the tug and the steamship were rolling. It was necessary to hoist us on board, and this was accomplished by lowering from the steamer a basket in shape not unlike a large pillar-box with a seat inside. Into this ship-lift four or five passengers were placed, the signal was given, and in a few minutes we were hoisted by crane from the tug to the main deck of the steamer. Need I say that this quite finished off the ladies and the babies, who retired below, and were not seen again. Rough indeed it was, and at our first meal after the ship had entered on her course few even of the male passengers put in an appearance.

Having got my sea-legs and fortified myself with the

ship's fare—always on either the Castle or the Union Line excellent—I soon began to enjoy the sea-breeze and the scenery in-shore. We had on board Major Serpa Pinto, the Portuguese fire-eater, who had made so much noise in the world. And I should say that he is not at all a bad fellow. He was about the most unlikely man you could think of as a military bully, being an extremely courteous and companionable passenger.

The coast scenery interests you. Mr. Rider Haggard sees much in it to admire. "There," he says, "are the deep kloops cut in the hills by the rushing rains of centuries, down which the rivers sparkle; there is the deepest green of the bush, growing as God planted it, and the other greens of the sugar patches; while here and there a white house, smiling out at the sea, puts a finish and gives an air of homeliness to the scene." The coast is marked with "red sandhills, and wide sweeps of vivid green, dotted here and there with Kaffir kraals, and bordered by a ribbon of white surf, which spouts up in pillars of foam where it juts the rocks."

As the vessel steams along the coast of Pondoland, lofty cliffs and table-topped summits come within view. These are known as the "Gates" of St. John's River. Within these "Gates" the scenery is grand and romantic. The steamer makes no stop, and consequently I had no opportunity of visiting any of the inner reaches of the river, but in terms of the greatest admiration these are written about by Mr. John Noble, Clerk of the Cape Parliament.

From seaward the river mouth is a noticeable object, and so remarkable that any one, having once seen it, or even a sketch of it, cannot fail to recognise it again. A lofty, table-topped mountain appears to have been cleft to its base, leaving a wedge-shaped gap, through which the river flows to the sea. The edges of the cleft, which near the mouth lie about two thousand feet asunder, approach each other, until near the top of the first reach they are about fifteen hundred feet apart. They rise in abrupt, forest-clad steeps, until they attain a height of six to seven hundred feet. From these edges on both sides of the river plateaus extend, until on each side other precipitous cliffs rise, which culminate about a mile and a half from the sea, where they attain a height of twelve hundred feet, and lie only four thousand feet apart—considerably less than a mile. These are the well-known "Gates" of St. John's or the Umzimvubu River.

Inside of the "Gates" the river partakes more of the character of a lake or lagoon than a stream. There is an expanse of sky-blue water nearly five hundred yards wide, between stately mountains and luxuriantly wooded hills. The steep, wooded slopes come down close to the edge of the water, and in many places the thick, tangled forest overhangs the margin, forming beautiful arcades. To appreciate the nature of this river scenery one must witness the indescribable beauties of the spot and its surroundings,—long, silent vistas of forest, with the ripple of water sounding through them; tumbled masses of rock,

covered with mosses, ferns, and flowering creepers of all sorts in most bewildering luxuriance, twining in heavy, clustering masses around majestic old trees, whose every bough and leaf find their reflection as in a mirror in the placid waters, until in some places it is difficult to tell where the reality ends and the shadow begins. The exquisite, semi-tropical vegetation, African in its type and almost Brazilian in its beauty; the charms of light and shade over the grand panorama of mountain, wood, and water ; and the glimpses of hill and dale forming the highlands in the extreme distance, and seemingly merging into the cobalt sky, furnish a picture of virgin nature untouched by art rarely to be met with. The mouth of St. John's River, like most of the rivers on the coast, is obstructed by a bar of shifting sand, the channel contracting, expanding, and changing its condition according to the volume of water or floods in the river.

Leaving the "Gates" astern, we sail within sight of the coast of Griqualand East, Tembuland, and Transkei ; and wonderfully beautiful and fertile coast-lands they are. As you muse on the steamer's deck, you ask yourself whence comes that wealth of verdure which clothes the coast all along which you have sailed. It is due, I was told, to the moisture carried by the trade winds of the Indian Ocean. The vapour-laden clouds are arrested or caught by the high mountain barriers, upon whose summits and sides these fertilizing showers descend. Inland are masses of mountain, and great stretches of

forest region; and still farther westward, their cliffs towering to the sky, loom the Drakensberg Range.

Voyagers usually speak in glowing terms of this coast; it is all so fair and fresh and green, that he would indeed be blind who could not see its beauties; but they are not always in sight; at nightfall they all disappear. Then the rough sea-shaking many of our passengers got off the Durban bar made them, I am afraid, indifferent as to whether they could see the coast or not. At any rate there were very few on deck until the good ship steamed to the mouth of the Buffalo River, on both banks of which East London has been built. Then shore-goers—and I was one of them—got their things together, and once more we were in the waters of Cape Colony. East London is another of the bar-plagued ports, but in other respects it is a healthy and delightful watering-place, and this we found on landing.

CHAPTER XXII.

SOME FLYING VISITS.

I HAD little time to spare at East London; but the hospitable firm of Messrs. Dunn & Co.—whose branches will, let me hope, spread even wider afield—insisted that I should join them at tiffin. Then I went round the town. It is well laid out, substantially built, and the signs are everywhere of an active and enterprising municipality. Being a favourite sea-bathing resort, with many beautiful spots within easy reach, the visitor is greatly tempted to stay awhile in the place. Picnic parties, excursions in this and that direction, pleasant walks and rides, are arranged for your pleasure; and, if you are leisurely seeing the world, there is no reason why you should not enjoy such things; but I was in a hurry, having set my mind on joining the *Garth Castle*, which was announced to leave Port Elizabeth in the following week.

The harbour improvement works are features of great interest. These are training walls, forming quays, which narrow the river's channel and increase the flows, practically keeping the passage clear to the deep water inside

the bar ; also a breakwater of concrete blocks, like that of Portland, constructed in the form of an arm outside, to prevent the sea from checking the river's outflow, and driving the sand back upon the bar. In former years occasional floods or freshets in the Buffalo River served to clear the bar, sometimes to a depth of seventeen feet, and vessels were then able to pass inside and discharge cargo without the use of surf-boats or the delays and risk attendant upon lying at an open anchorage outside. But since the works have been proceeded with no freshets have occurred, and there have been accumulations of sand, shallowing the entrance to the river. To remove the sand a powerful dredger was ordered, and is now at work.

Having seen all that I could well see during the time at my disposal, I left East London by the afternoon train, arriving three hours later at King William's Town, or, as it is shortly called, "King." The distance between the two places is forty-two miles, and the line is through an interesting piece of country, the town being on the high-way from the harbour of East London to the interior. King William's Town is of considerable importance, being the principal centre of the native trade carried on in the border districts, and those north of Basutoland. What pleased me particularly was its home look. You might indeed have fancied you were in an English town. It stretches pleasantly along the banks of the Buffalo River, and is well sheltered.

I had a letter of introduction to a gentleman, who I found was one of the best-informed men I had ever the pleasure of meeting. Let me introduce him to the reader. Mr. Baker, of King William's Town. Colonial history and colonial politics he had by heart, and it struck me that he could give some of our Colonial Office officials a good start at a competitive examination, and leave them nowhere at the finish. With him I had several agreeable drives, and he certainly did all in his power to make my short stay enjoyable.

The prosperous air of the town is noticeable at once. There are indications everywhere of well-spent money. At the western end is the native location. Then the military barracks and officers' quarters. In the business part of the town are public buildings, stores, club-houses, and so forth. Another portion of the town is occupied by the German settlers, in which there are some pretty thatched verandahed cottages. Beyond are the camp and headquarters of the Colonial defensive force. The town-hall is a credit to the place; it is large and commodious, and, I may say, satisfies everybody. Between this building and the river are the Botanical Gardens, with an area of about fourteen acres of alluvial soil of the richest description, where everything grows in the greatest luxuriance.

On a rise to the north are the public offices, on which has been erected a memorial clock tower in memory of the Rev. J. Brownlee, who commenced the

first mission station in Kaffraria on the site of the present town. Near this is the handsome and imposing edifice erected by Sir George Grey (and known as the Grey Native Hospital), for the purpose of breaking the belief of the natives in witch-doctors, by placing skilful medical treatment and maintenance within their reach free of charge. It has now been established more than a quarter of a century, and the success of the institution among the natives is proved by the number who travel hundreds of miles to seek medical and surgical aid, showing that the Kaffir people are breaking through their race prejudices, and acknowledging the superiority of scientific treatment of ordinary diseases.

Having dotted down Graham's Town on my plan as one of the places to be visited, I set out on a long and exhausting drive of twelve hours. The conveyance was the post-cart, and in additiom to the driver and myself there was another passenger—a missionary. I was very thankful afterwards that we had the missionary with us. The look on his face was an exhortation to be patient, even at the worst parts of the road. Hard swearing, or indeed swearing either hard or soft, is not an accomplishment of mine ; but my back and bones were so sore during that ride that I felt it would be a comfort if I could have big d——d the conveyance, the road, and myself for travelling in the post-cart ; but when the desire rose the missionary looked so reproachfully, as though he knew all about it, that I had not

the heart to anathematize the concern. Nevertheless, it was a trial. We passed through a well-wooded and hilly region, in which there were many grassy hollows and flowering heaths, where one could have lingered long and happily; but there is no enjoyment in even the loveliest region after sitting for hours in a post-cart.

At last the journey came to an end, and we were at Graham's Town. It has been described as the "Winchester" of South Africa, owing to its ecclesiastical and educational advantages. And these are greater than you would look for, if you had driven with me from King William's Town. Indeed, the social and intellectual activities of Graham's Town are much like those of an English cathedral town, and people of culture will find in the public buildings and their surroundings much to interest them. One's first impression is that the town is a charming English health resort embosomed in green hills. The roadways are lined with trees, and the houses have well-kept fronts suggestive of English comfort within.

The heights above the town command a magnificent view of characteristic frontier scenery—an exquisite landscape of tumbled hills and dales, variegated with verdant slopes and wooded heights, and backed by massive mountains, whose tops fade into the blue haze on the far-distant horizon. Woest Hill on the one side, and Botha Hill on the other, each afford a good prospect; but the culminating point of view is Governor's Kop,

an eminence about two thousand seven hundred feet high, ten miles east of the city. Directly in front and north-eastward the dark valleys of the Great Fish River extend; one can discern the towers of Fort Peddie and the sandhills between the Fish River and the Beka, and in the distance the mountains of Kaffraria.

Do not imagine, pray, that I clambered up the heights above the town and feasted my eyes on the landscape. I saw through other people's eyes, being too sore to attempt any hill climbing. And yet it was worth an effort, for one would have seen spread out in all their loveliness the fair gardens of Albany. But one must not forget the town itself. In St. George's Cathedral in the High Street there is a monument erected to the memory of Colonel Graham, from whom the city takes its name. It is a city of bishops. There is the Anglican Bishop, and the Roman Catholic Bishop, and the Wesleyan Superintendent, as good as another bishop; and in the different churches and chapels established here may be heard clergymen and ministers of all denominations. There are also law courts, judges, and barristers; and, as for solicitors, their name is legion. I trouble you with these details in order that you may be quite satisfied that Graham's Town is a delightful place to live in; and I can adduce no more convincing proof of this than the fact that the Church and the Law have taken deeper root there than in any other town I have seen in South Africa.

I think this is quite conclusive testimony. It is certainly worth tons of any other kind. For where the Law and the Church are, depend upon it they are in clover. That the climate is genial, that the people are well to do, and that they are in beautiful surroundings are facts I see clearly proven in the face of every churchman and every lawyer in Graham's Town. I don't suggest that they keep up appearances in order that rich invalids, either pious or litigious, may be attracted and their substance devoured; but it did occur to me that it would be wise to leave your cheque-book at home, and make your bargains as though you were spending your last shilling.

The green hills, within the shelter of which the town has been built, are the spurs of the Zuurberg Mountains. The famous Pass of the same name is best approached by leaving the Coerney Station, and making your way through the Addo Bush—a dense jungle, common enough in the frontier districts. Nearing the foot of the Pass, the mountain heights, clothed with the strange, stiff, gaunt forms of the gigantic Euphorbia, present somewhat of a gloomy aspect. But this soon changes. When the first ascent of a quarter of a mile is made, there is a grand and beautiful disclosure of hill and forest scenery. Above these are imposing, bushy cliffs and weather-stained rocks; while in the valley outstretched below, lofty trees, draped with grey lichens or festooned with convolvulus, wild vine, or monkey-rope parasites, stand

up like ancient monarchs, as they are, out of the tangled mass of copse, clustering shrubs, flowering plants, grasses, and ferns which form the undergrowth vegetation.

Through this the road rises, cut out of the solid rock on one side, with deep perpendicular precipices on the other, until it passes through a rocky gateway, and emerges at the top, on what is apparently a tableland of grassy downs, but in reality is one of the several hilly ridges running off into deep furrows and kloops in every direction. It is in crossing these "necks" or ridges that the peculiar character of the Zuurberg is realized and seen to advantage. The scene is thus described by Pringle, the poet of South Africa: "A billowy chaos of naked mountains, rocks, precipices, and yawning abysses, that looked as if hurled together by some prodigious convulsion of nature; while over the lower declivities and deep-sunk dells a dark impenetrable forest spreads its shaggy skirts, and adds to the whole a still more wild and savage sublimity."

Some part of the range is seen on the way from King William's Town, and you go through a wild and romantic pass called Pluto's Pass; but the most impressive scenery in this mountain region is that which you witness on the way to the coast. Fortunately you have to undergo no post-cart trials on the way down. The Midland Railway conveys you swiftly and comfortably the journey of a hundred and six miles, and I confess to feeling thankful that the iron horse was within my reach,

even if the smoke and the steam whistle and the tail of carriages somewhat detracted from the romantic features of the region. But really you lose very little, and the gain in comfort and cheerfulness is immense. There is another line from Graham's Town to Port Alfred, some forty-three miles long ; but I had booked to Port Elizabeth, and to that town I journeyed. When I arrived the *Garth Castle* was in the bay. I sent my belongings—now swollen with things—on board, and in a little time longer I saw the last of Port Elizabeth from the deck of the steamer as she stood out to sea.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE LAST OF THE TRIP.

I HAD arrived at Cape Town on the voyage out in the spring of the year—that is to say, in the Cape spring, namely, in November. On my way home—that is, after leaving Port Elizabeth—I paid a return visit to Cape Town in March, or, according to the Cape almanack, in autumn. I think, therefore, I may safely say that I spent the spring of 1889 and the summer of 1890 in South Africa. You would say that I had spent the winter in South Africa, and according to the months you would be right; but when you are on the other side of the globe the almanack is turned upside down, and with it turn the seasons.

My first visit to Cape Town was only a flying one, and, though I missed some pleasant excursions, I could hardly spare the time on the next occasion to make a longer stay. I don't mind confessing that I was anxious to get home. One or two places, however, I determined to see before leaving. You may perhaps remember that earlier in this narrative I said just one word about

Robben Island. This is the isle of lepers. It is a spot of melancholy interest, about six miles from the mainland, and reached by means of a little steamer belonging to the Government, which plies to and from twice a week. You are nearly an hour tossing about while the vessel steams to a dry, sandy, and exposed little island in Table Bay, about three thousand acres in extent. There is no pier or landing stage, and passengers are carried on the backs of native boatmen from the boats to the shore. The island is covered with a short, thick bush, affording cover to some sorts of game. It is a salubrious spot, as good perhaps for the unhappy people who exist there as any other at present known.

In addition to the leper wards, there are separate buildings for lunatics. These, except the violent and unsafe, are allowed to roam at pleasure about the island. The chronic sick are accommodated in a building with a fine sea view, and nothing appears to be wanting to relieve suffering. In the daytime the lunatics who can be trusted may be seen amusing themselves in different ways. "One is commonly set to watch another; and if you question A., whom you see on a strict and consequential look-out in some part of the island, on what he is so closely intent, with a sly smile he will point to B., and say, 'I am taking care of that poor fellow;' but when you approach B., and put a like interrogatory to him, he will tell you, casting a cunning glance at A., 'I am looking after him; he is not quite right.'"

The leper wards are in three sheds, thatched and comfortless; and a terrible sight the inmates present. Visitors quickly pass by; and is it any wonder? The poor creatures—thirty or forty of them—are dreadful objects; indeed, words are utterly inadequate to describe the state in which their bodies are. The hands and feet of some had dropped off joint by joint. To see little fellows hobbling about on padded knees, having no feet, was a heart-breaking spectacle. The hideous faces of those whose eyes and cheeks had gone, and who were barely recognizable as human beings, caused even professional men to turn their heads away, and one was glad to hurry from the spot. Even in the breezy air of the island, and in the sail to the mainland, it was difficult to keep from dwelling on the pitiable and miserable sight witnessed on Robben Island.

When Cetewayo was in captivity in Cape Town, he stayed in an old Dutch house at Oude Molen. The room in which he received visitors was bare, save for a few chairs, and here "Cetewayo, a fine, large man, of dignified mien, and sad, gentle expression, dressed in an ill-cut blue serge suit, and sitting ill at ease in an armchair, looked a long way from being at home." Near a brick-built cottage, a few hundred yards away, Langibalele would be found, "sitting on the trunk of a tree, shading himself from the sun. Of middle height, blear-eyed, old, decrepit, and almost in rags, he formed a sorry contrast to the dignified majesty of Cetewayo. To Bishop Colenso, Langibalele

owed it that his sentence to convict labour for life was reduced to twenty years' safe custody on the mainland.

The short time left to me was spent very pleasantly in Cape Town, my friends there being determined that the last impressions of my visit to South Africa should be those of the kindliest colonial hospitality. It now only remained to go on board. With steam up, the *Garth Castle* was ready to start. "You will come out again," said my friends, shaking hands. "Don't say no, for we know you will." And perhaps I may.

There was nothing on the homeward voyage I need refer to here. It was swift and uneventful; and when I arrived at home I found all well.

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